EVERCADE EVOLUTION

ISSUE 05

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ATARI 50 Anniversary Special

ALSO INSIDE

ATARI ALL THE WAY

ONE FOR THE RHOADES!

BACK TO THE ARCADES

Vaughan and the team help Atari celebrate 50 years with a look at **Atari Collection 2.**

April has been busy again this issue bringing you a **fantastic interview** with **Scott Rhoades.**

We return to Harry's arcade as he guides us through the offerings of **Atari Arcade Collection 1.**

WELCOME TO EVERCADE EVOLUTION ISSUE 5

Welcome, finally, to issue 5. I know it's been a long time. We haven't been able to release as often as we'd like but we're back and we couldn't be happier with the results.

As you will have seen on the front cover, issue 5 is our Atari 50th anniversary special. I'll let you in on a little secret. Not only have we reviewed Atari Collection 2 and Atari Arcade 1 but we also have an amazing interview with Scott Rhoades. Scott worked as a writer out at Atari in Sunnyvale during the 7800 and Lynx days and his interview makes for great reading.

Do you want another little secret? We have had Scott's interview in the bag for almost two years. We decided to keep it under wraps and include it in the same issue as Atari Collection 2. Little did we know this would be 22 months later…

Since then the arcade carts have been announced and released. That's when we came up with the bright idea to also include the Atari Arcade 1 reviews to make one bumper Atari issue.

Once again, real life got in the way and the mag was hit with more delays. Those of you in the Facebook group or on Twitter will have seen Vaughan's many premature "Coming Soon" posts. To be honest you can't blame him. He was told "it should be done by the end of the month" on at least four occasions.

The stars did align however as these further delays meant that our Atari special coincided with Atari's 50th Anniversary year. I'd like to say this was planned but sometimes you just get lucky.

Although we haven't released for a while you folks have still been buying the mags on Amazon which still blows us away. Another mind blowing moment was when Darran Jones from Retro Gamer magazine asked me to do a little interview as part of their EXP article; a sort of fan's perspective and talking about Evercade Evolution. This was a huge honour and something we're all proud of.

Shortly after the release of this issue we will be making an appearance at the Nottingham Video Games Expo. This will give us the opportunity to sell our mag in person for the first time. Another huge milestone for our team.

I'll now leave you to get on with issue 5 and hopefully next time it won't take so long. If it is, you can blame this little thing. Getting everything in place for her is one of the reasons I've not been able to focus on the mag but I'm sure you'll understand.

Until next time.

LIAM

VAUGHAN "AND ONE" ANSCOMBE

MARK "RAIN MAKER" RUTLAND

ERIK "DOWN TOWN" DOWNIE

JAMES "SWISH" WILLIAMS

CRAZY "BALLER" BURGER

ALLAN "ALLEY OOP" BENZIES

CHRISTIAN "HOPS" HOWARD

DAVID "DIMES" PHILLIPS

ED "BUZZER BEATER" REGAN

PAUL "PURE" REDWOOD

PAUL "TRIPLE DOUBLE" TWIST

ROBERTO "GOAT" GARCIA-LAGO

LAWRENCE "BUCKETS" BOWYER

KARL "AFTER BURNER" BURNETT

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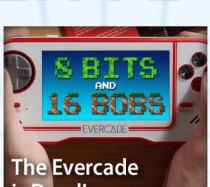
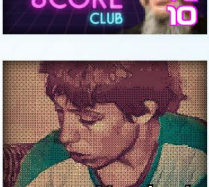
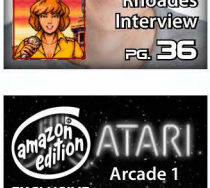




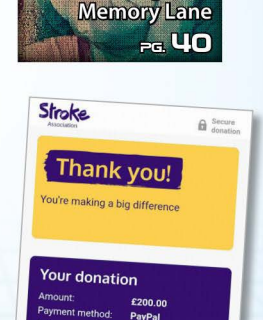


One last thing before we let you crack on. Readers of issue 4 will know that we were donating all profits from the first month to the Stroke Association.

This was in support of Chris, AKA GamingGrandad on Youtube. Chris raises loads of money for the charity through his love of retro video games.

Unfortunately Chris himself has suffered badly with strokes for a number of years and had a major one just before the release of issue 4.

We wish Chris all the best for the future and with your help we were able to raise just short of £200 for a great cause.


Stroke
Association
Secure
donation
Thank you!
You're making a big difference
Your donation
Amount:
£200.00
Payment method:
PayPal
Reference:
SAWD03358516
You're amazing!
It's thanks to supporters like you that we can fund ground-breaking research and vital support services.
Your gift will help rebuild the lives of stroke survivors and their families.
If you need us at any point we're here to help. Our Supporter Care team is only a phone call away – reach us on 0300 330 0740.

Evercade Chronicle

At Home on the Evercade

Written by
Liam Isaacs

One of the biggest announcements since issue 4 was the introduction of home computer carts to the Evercade's lineup, joining the home consoles and arcade game carts. For many fans, maybe more so the Europeans, this is the announcement they had been waiting for.

The video game crash of '83 didn't have too much of an effect this side of the pond as most gamers at the time favoured home computers over home consoles.

With this in mind our transatlantic friends can probably imagine why the C64 cart was met with so much excitement. For many of us (not so much me) this is where our gaming nostalgia lies.

Inserting your favourite game cassette (more than likely a pirate copy) into the Datasette then waiting an eternity, while praying to the gaming gods for it to load successfully.

Long before the SNES vs Mega Drive debate, playground battles were fought over Commodore 64 vs ZX Spectrum, which is another cart that would go down a treat.

By now many of you will be reliving your youth, discovering new C64 games or even discovering the C64 for the first time.

Gone are the excruciating load times. Now we have almost instantaneous loading times and save states. All you have to do is enjoy the games.

Granted, they are not all smash hits. There are some duffers on there but I suppose there's something for everybody. Maybe we will see more of the household names on a C64 Collection 2?

Just like buses you wait ages for one, then two come along at once. Fresh off the back of The C64 Collection 1 release we were treated to the news that Blaze have also struck a deal with Amiga.

The Amiga still has a huge following in Europe with large dedicated events taking place to this day. It was at one of these events where we first heard about the deal.

At Amiga 37, held in Germany in October, it was exclusively announced that Blaze had signed a deal to bring Amiga games to the Evercade.

A few days later Blaze put out their press release confirming the news and giving us a little bit more on what the deal entails. We have not been given a release date as of yet and I should imagine the cart is still in the early stages of development. They did however state that the deal allows them to release Amiga games from multiple publishers.

Built to Last!

***I**m sure a lot of you will agree that the Lego video games series has produced some fantastic entries over the last decade or so, even if they are a guilty pleasure. Well, now Lego have gone full circle. This time it isn't famous franchises receiving the Lego video game treatment but a certain video game console. Not specifically announced as an Atari 50th anniversary celebration but the Atari 2600 has had a fantastic looking Lego rebuild.*

This retro gamer's dream of a set includes the console, a joystick controller, three game cartridges, a rather naff looking cartridge rack, three dioramas (one of each game) and an exclusive mini-figure, complete with Atari t-shirt.

First things first: this set looks amazing. I'm sure a few of you didn't even realise the main image was a Lego model and not a photo of an actual 2600. This is all down to the attention to detail. Lego, or the designer Chris McVeigh, has done an excellent job of capturing the 2600 in all its glory.

The console itself is the four-switch model, woodgrain and all. The controller has a cable which plugs into the back of the console and a fully movable joystick. The three game cartridges included are Adventure, Asteroids and Centipede. Each cartridge features an artwork sticker with a creative Lego re-imagining of the original design. To add to the authenticity, the cartridges fit perfectly into the console's cartridge slot.

As well as the three cartridges you also get a awsome looking mini diorama depicting a scene from each game. These are a nice touch and are fun mini-builds in their own right.

There's even a hidden extra or easter egg if you will. Sliding the front of the console lid forward pops up a bedroom scene straight from the 80s. As well as displaying a boombox, VHS tape and other paraphernalia, you have a little gamer wearing his Atari t-shirt, joystick in hand, playing his 2600.

Is this set expensive? Yes! At £209.99 ($239.99 / €239.99) it's not cheap but that doesn't stop us wanting one.

New Year New Look for Atari

Atari have unveiled a special, limited time only, 50th anniversary company logo. This new semi-transparent green design pays tribute to Atari's original offices in Sunnyvale, California - where it all began. Along with the more common 50th anniversary logo, as seen on the cover of this very magazine, you will see the green logo crop up on Atari's anniversary products and merchandise. This rather groovy looking logo is called the "Borregas", named after the street where the old headquarters were found.

Hunting Wabbits

The team over at the Video Game History Foundation have tracked down a long lost gaming pioneer. Ban Tran, a Vietnamese immigrant who created the Atari 2600 game Wabbit, which featured the first ever female protagonist, was lost to time and proved impossible to track down. That was until one member discovered the bankruptcy records for Apollo, the game's publisher, which showed the employees who were owed money. This was the "Eureka" moment which showed Ban Tran was actually called Van Tran who has since married and is now called Van Mai. With that fine detective work an important story in video game history is now complete.

For all the latest news and updates visit Martin's site **Evercade.info**

Could Barcades Save the Arcades?

Over the last few years we have seen more and more "Barcades" emerging; bars which have large collections of arcade cabinets and retro consoles for punters to enjoy while knocking back a few drinks.

Some charge a small admission fee with all the machines inside set to free play which makes it heaven for retro video game fans. Some go down the old school route and sell tokens at the bar which tend to be at a fair price. The business model relies on the patrons buying drinks, usually alcoholic, and this is where the venue makes their money. The video games are merely a mechanic to get gamers through the doors and it seems to be effective.

This model must be working as in the UK we are seeing more and more barcades pop up on a monthly basis. There are even barcade chains such as NQ64. From the outside looking in this seems like a great venture. If the companies, often independent or small chains, make a profit and we get to spend our nights out playing arcade games rather than in sticky clubs drinking warm beer then it's a win-win.

NQ64 now has venues in Manchester (two separate locations), Liverpool, Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow and, most recently, Newcastle. They also have plans in place for Nottingham and Belfast. Four Quarters, which has three venues across London, has opened a new barcade in Bristol. Arcade Club, the largest of the barcades with over 200 cabinets to choose from, has sites in Manchester, Bury and now Blackpool, and that's just the barcade chains.

There are plenty of independent barcades appearing too such as Rewind Retro Arcade which has recently opened up in Bedford.

So could barcades be the saviour of arcades? It's no secret that traditional arcades are dying out fast. How do you feel about mixing alcohol and gaming? More importantly can you trust a bunch of Brits to not get blind drunk and trash the machines?

Personally I think, if managed well, barcades can keep arcades alive for years to come and sound like a great night out in the process.

That's One for the Archives!

It's not just Blaze preserving video games for future generations now. Sony has created a game preservation division with Garrett Fredley tweeting that he has started a new job as the senior build engineer of the preservation team. Garrett previously worked for EA as part of the FIFA preservation team. A newly elected Japanese politician, Ken Akamatsu, is pushing legislation to preserve Japanese video games aiming for "legal preservation of past games in a playable state". Then there's the Embracer Group who are in their infancy but have already spent over $2,000,000 acquiring over 50,000 games and consoles which are waiting to be catalogued.

Dr. Pong's Brain Training

Scientists at Cortical Labs in Australia have taught brain cells in a dish to play a variation of the Atari classic Pong. The dish has a mix of mice and human neurons grown from stem cells and is affectionately known as "DishBrain". At first the brain cells just moved the paddle around randomly but by using electrodes to give feedback when the paddle missed the ball the brain cells, all 800,000 of them, were playing competently within five minutes. You can see for yourself by searching "Brains in a dish play Pong" on YouTube.

For all the latest news and updates visit Martin's site **Evercade.info**

Many video games are cancelled before they are ever released. Sometimes these games are fully completed but never see the light of day. For years these games are forgotten about with many lost forever. Luckily for us retro game fans a few of these games are found, finished and finally released for us all to enjoy!

Let's start with Taito's Bubble Bobble predecessor The Fairyland Story. Originally released as an arcade game in 1985 before a Famicom port was advertised in a few magazines in 1986. This home conversion however was never released and long forgotten.

That was until FenrisWolfRetro received a prototype cartridge as part of a Famicom lot bought on Ebay. The game has now been completed and has a rom dump online at forestillusion.com.

Next up we have an unreleased Quake prototype for the Game Boy Advance.

Randy Linden, who was the programmer behind the SNES port of Doom, created the GBA prototype in 2002 but it never saw the light of day... until now. A fully working ROM can be found online, once again at forestillusion.com.

Our third game is 1991's unreleased arcade sequel, Marble Madness II.

After two revisions of the game scored poorly with test groups it was eventually ditched. A fully working ROM has now appeared online out of nowhere, to little fanfare, and can be found on archive.org.

Our final game, another one found over on forestillusion.com and another GBA prototype, is Mario Kart XXL.

This was a tech demo by the German developers Denaris Entertainment Software which was pitched to Nintendo of Europe back in 2004. Unlike the fixed behind-the-player camera found in Mario Kart Super Circuit, XXL had a full 3D model and "dynamic" camera which moved around the kart.

Catchup

In issue 3 we told you how Christian Howard aka The Crimson Howler aka The Cameo Kid was aiming for the record of most cameo appearances in video games. Here's where he has cropped up since issue 4...

Deathwish Enforcers - Run-n-Gun - PS4, PS5 and Switch.

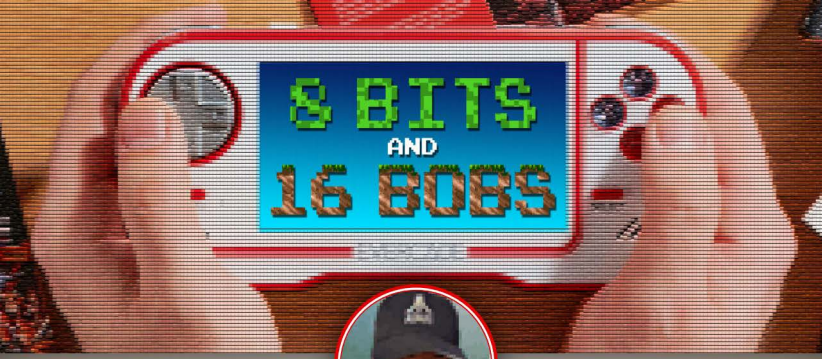
Reknum Souls Adventure - now available on PS4, Switch and, best of all, the Evercade.

Operation Highjump: The Fall of Berlin - A platformer/shooter available on PS4, PS5, Switch, Xbox One, PC and Mac.

GemaBoy Zero Origins - Out now on Switch by Nape Games the creators of Evercade's Ploid and the upcoming Renkum Souls Adventure.

Where will he pop up next? Well until he shows up again, you can find him on Twitter or even game with him on the Xbox Network at the handles below.

ImCrimsonHowler **TheCameoKid**



The Evercade is Dead!

Long Live the Evercade!

The wind of change seems to have been blowing around the Evercade these last few weeks, at least that's the impression those on their soapboxes want to give you.

Lines in the sand seem to have been drawn, placards raised, punters wearing A-frames with 'the end is nigh' hastily painted on with Deluxe Paint walk the streets shouting to all that will listen.

Preachers line the street corners standing on brown boxes speaking in loud voices, asking you to repent and give up your Evercadian ways. YouTubers with clickbait titles (nothing new there then) would have you believe that the Evercade has gone the way of the Dreamcast, Lynx and Gizmondo and many more that I just don't have the stamina (or knowledge) to mention. They say we should move on and let the system rest in pieces.

If the podcasts, FB and Twitter feeds are to be believed we are playing a dead or dying system. It's on its last legs. It's the walking dead of the retro console world.

And then you have the voices that tell you the machine can be 'saved' if only it will repent and allow ROMs to be placed within its shiny innards. There is hope in the old girl, but only if 'fans' are listened to and acted upon. Yeah, like the big boys listen to what you want! Like they pay any attention to you throwing your CDs out of the disk drive.

The evangelists knock on your social media door announcing to the world that they are selling up and moving on. Like the animals who abandoned ship when they found Noah was not the carpenter he was cracked up to be.

Those with loudhailers attack your senses, thinking that if they talk (I'm being polite - if they shout louder) they will be listened to. "THE EVERCADE DOES NOT DO WHAT IT WAS SUPPOSED TO DO AND IS NOT DOING WHAT IT COULD DO!"

There are too many weak games, "NO REAL BANGERS," a loud voice was heard to shout. If only they went out and got those games, that would bring me round and that would save the system.

If only they introduced online functions like leaderboards that's the way to go I guarantee it.

I will put in a slight disclaimer here because even though I write for this magazine (yes, I know what I do is more on the level of a 3 year old but it's all you have got so we're stuck with each other) I am not all the other way. I am not completely pro-Evercade. I have had my issues

You can keep up with me on Twitter, on my blog or read my sci-fi stories below:

6thDr 6thdr.wordpress.com wattpad.com/user/VaughanAnscombe

with things in the past that I wrote about and chose to leave it alone.

Because when it comes down to it for me, and I would guess most of the silent and content majority, this system is doing what it says on the tin. It brought me into retro games after such a long time away. It has introduced me to this fab community (The Evercade Fans Hub) that, yes, you could argue is fan-driven and you would be right. But that's the other thing about the Evercade; it has not only touched upon having physical cartridges but also brought back games from your past that you used to love, like or hate. Hey, after all, one man's *Jammy Dodger* is another man's *Rich Tea*. For me it seems to have tapped into the initial wonder that the early 8-bit systems brought, and that is a club I like to belong to.

As I walk the picket lines trying to avoid all this, as I make my way to Evolution Towers, the negative noise really does its best to get me down. I play retro games to get away from the trials of real life. I write (Yes, write *sigh*) the way I do to bring a little laughter or at least a smile into people's lives.

So contrary to the wind, all the noise, all the shouting, hollering and just outright moaning, it's not EVERYBODY that is moving on, it's not ALL of us that have become disheartened with the Evercade.

We just don't have the battery life to bother shouting about it. I don't have the stamina to bother talking down all those wanting to jump!

I understand everybody has a point of view and most are valid, I just don't need to be bombarded with it all the time. Life is too short. If you don't like it or it's not for you then move along. I will be sorry to see you go but you have your own gaming life to lead and so do I.

Each to their own.

(Normal happy service will be resumed sometime in the following issues)

Evolution cannot be held responsible for anybody that takes offense to this mad man's views.

All views are his own and he will be punished accordingly.

Stop reading this, you will hurt your eyes.

Move onto something more upbeat.

Bits and Bobs: Part 2

It may be a rant, but it's a nice rant!

It's been a while since I felt compelled to have a rant, a mini rant, a moan, which I know is ironic considering that's what I was moaning about in the first place.

The new handheld has been announced and, well, that's for another time, I just really want to talk about us, the community.

The picket lines have dispersed. Oh, there's still the odd couple camped out on the local green with their banners and that's fine, each to their own. Everybody else has either moved on or the sudden rush of outrage has dissipated.

This place we have here, this FB group or hub as we like to say (Not a member? You really should be. Answer the questions and join in the fun), this magazine we have raised to become the wonderful page-turner that she has turned out to be is amazing and gets such a positive response from our extended family.

This machine, the Evercade, in all its forms has tapped into something quite unique, something rich and beautiful. It has tapped into nostalgia not just for the games we played but the experiences we had playing those games. We have like-minded people to share those experiences with, both nostalgically and in the present.

And that's great, something that should be nurtured, loved and cared for, something that should be celebrated.

Evercade has become, at least for me, bigger than the actual machine itself. It has become something amazing. It has brought wonder and excitement into my life (I know I lead a pretty sad life, but my shrink says I am making progress).

And I hope that it has done something similar for you.

So fellow Evercadians, as a wise old Vulcan once said, "You can't play 3D space chess without Kirking up once in a while".

VAUGHAN

EVERCADE FANS Hub

LIVE STREAMS WITH ADMIN AND GUESTS • FREE FANZINE
HIGH SCORE CHALLENGES • COMPETITIONS AND PRIZES

P1

ROGER'S UPDATE

ALL THINGS GREAT IN OUR FANS GROUP

Hello everyone and welcome to issue 5 of Evercade Evolution from your Fans Hub section! Liam and the guys have been hard at work building this fantastic issue and we look forward to your comments over on our Facebook group!

I have a couple of subjects to chat about but first a big thanks to our community and all you guys who contribute news and articles!

At the time of writing, the bonus content is soon to be revealed for the upcoming **Evercade EXP**. This amazingly beautiful device will have the preorder open over on Funstock for the white version and hopefully a second chance at that Limited Edition black version for anyone who missed it. I personally can't wait for the **IREM** and **TOAPLAN** collections and hope this will pave the way for more well established gaming companies to join Evercade!

Your Fans Hub is busy too. We are approaching **1900 members** at the time of writing this letter and hope to hit that magic 2000 members by the end of the year! You can help us do this by spreading word of our Hub over social media or any other way to your friends and relatives. Perhaps we can do a giveaway too. I'll see if I can rustle up some goodies for that.

Don't forget we also have Erik's High Score Challenges and the new challenge for this month should be up at this time. You can also take part in previous months by viewing Erik's pinned post in the Hub.

My main topic this month is piracy. At the Fans Hub we don't like devices that infringe on the Evercade in this way. All posts and comments are read and we will take action to remove anything on this subject and if necessary repeating these posts may lead to being suspended from posting or possible removal. We believe the majority of people would want licensed content and don't want publishers to avoid bringing their games to the Evercade if they feel they are not going to be supported (everyone likes to get paid). So please, read our rules and if in any doubt over what you're sharing, message an admin who will help.

With it being the holiday/vacation season your Retro Gaming Revival and Fans Hub joint streams are temporarily on hold. Any suggestions for content can be posted in the Fans Hub and we will do our best to incorporate them into future episodes! Don't worry, we will be back soon.

On a personal note, I would like to give a massive thanks to Erik, Peter and the guys for running the group. I don't want to bore you with details but it's not been a very good time for me. Things are getting better and I appreciate the great team we have in place.

Enjoy this issue's content and I'll see you around in the Hub!

ROGER

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>> THE EVERCADE FANS HUB TEAM <<

P1 P2

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2022

ERIK'S HIGH SCORE CLUB

HEY GUYS IT'S ERIK

Hey there high score chasers!

From the start of 2022 a new High Score Challenge was introduced to those that wished to show their scoring prowess. Instead of just a standard 'score as much as you can' high score table every month, there will be 12 games, released one per month, played over the course of the year.

This time the high score tables stay open all year long, so anybody can join in at any point in the year and have their high scores added to all the tables. At the end of each month a snapshot is taken to show who is winning the most points at that stage in the…

'22 Minute Challenge!

That's right, the time limit on each game is a maximum of 22 minutes. On top of that it might not even be a high score challenge and could be something like reaching the highest level in that time limit.

So, come and join in! Depending on when you are reading this, you've got until the end of 2022 to join in with all the games. You can find the rules and games pinned to the top of the Fan Hub.

Until next time, keep on scoring!

22 MINUTES

ATARI
COLLECTION 2
EVERCADE

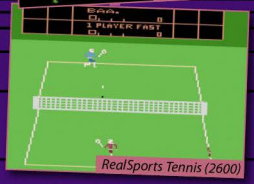
ATARI COLLECTION 2

SCANNER

OVERALL SCORE

6/10

Asteroids (7800)



RealSports Tennis (2600)

Solaris (2600)

CART NUMBER: 05

RELEASED: 22/05/20

GAMES: 20

Air Sea Battle (2600)
Asteroids (7800)
Basketbrawl (7800)
Bowling (2600)
Centipede (7800)
Dark Chambers (2600)
Demons to Diamonds (2600)
Desert Falcon (7800)
Haunted House (2600)
Human Cannonball (2600)
Millipede (2600)
Planet Smashers (7800)
Radar Lock (2600)
RealSports Tennis (2600)
Solaris (2600)
Sprint Master(2600)
Street Racer (2600)
Submarine Commander (2600)
Wizard (2600)
Yars' Revenge (2600)

Reviewed by
Christian Howard
(aka The Cameo Kid)
ImCrimsonHowler

The year was 1977 (5 years before I was born). Atari launched the Atari 2600 at $189 a pop which equates to around $900 now (how crazy is that?). These were the days when games were simple and fun, not online, just you and your brother or sister or maybe a friend having a blast playing on your first home console.

Atari is still putting these great, or not so great, games out in collection format now, so we fast forward to 2022 and get to enjoy some of these great titles on the Evercade! Reliving a great time in video game history or remembering just how bad these games are, the Atari Collection 2 comes with 20 games and I I played them all, so let's start out with Asteroids. Ya, everyone loves Asteroids, right? Wrong. It's just one of the games I can't get into. The controls for me feel wonky, playing as a small ship among big, flying rocks - it's not that great. I had to move on to Yars' Revenge and this one got me excited. I always loved this game as it's simple yet fun. If this came out today on cell phones even today's kids would love it, it def held up after all these years. I'd love to sit here and explain every detail of every game but that would take a whole magazine in itself so I'll get to the good stuff; Dark Chambers! One of the best box arts in video games with its D&D art style - it's so good! I remember picking that one up at a used game store in 1990 and I still own it! You pretty much explore an underground maze in the style of Gauntlet, looking for hidden treasures as you try to find an exit with zombies and wizards trying to stop you. Just this game alone was worth the review but I think we need to move on as I could talk all day about Dark Chambers.

Dark Chambers (2600)

I want to touch on the sports games - we get a few in this cart like Bowling, Tennis and some racing games. But let's talk about Basket Brawl, one of, if not the, best sports games on Atari 7800. Basketball with fists! If the other team scores then

Basketbrawl (7800)

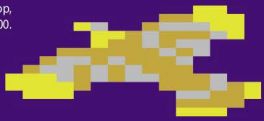
Demons to Diamonds (2600)

Desert Falcon (7800)

punch the players in the face, knock them down and take the ball back. This was such a great concept and a fun game to play that it prob inspired games like Mutant League Hockey. I prob spent a lot of time on just this one - the graphics pushed the Atari and look amazing now on the Evercade. It's so smooth and really feels good on both handheld and the VS but if you're going to have an Atari collection you have to have Demons to Diamonds, one of the few shooters you can play and still relax. Can you master the skills and chase more points each game? This is one of those games you will play over and over trying to beat your friend's score. Try it out, maybe make a bet or two. I played with my buddy for hours and he still owes me a shot of whiskey!

Before I leave, do you wonder if this collection is right for you? Then you need to play and check out Solaris. Such a great shooter, the colours in this game just pop, pushing the capabilities of the Atari 2600. It's prob the best shooter of its time.

I want to say, as I close off this review, that Atari gave us the best they could with what little they had back then. I'm 40 years old, have teen kids and I/we still play them today some 35+ years later. I love Atari. I won't say every game on this cart is great but the Evercade team put together some of the best, sprinkled in a few of the worst and gave us a journey back to a time of peace, love and video games!



AND THE SCORES ARE IN...

CHRISTIAN'S SCORES

GAME VARIETY
7/10

Out of the Atari collections, I'm going with this one.

GAME QUALITY
7/10

Great games. They gave us Solaris!!

PLAY TIME
8/10

Dark Chambers and Demons to Diamonds will eat your time away.

REPLAY VALUE
8/10

This cart will be in my 'to go' bag for sure. Def a daily play for me.

ALLAN'S SCORES

GAME VARIETY
7/10

Plenty of games to choose from the Atari 2600 and 7800 however it's very shooter heavy and simplistic.

GAME QUALITY
6/10

Although there are some classics here like Yar's Revenge, Centipede and Asteroids some of the games haven't aged well or just don't have much to them.

PLAY TIME
5/10

Due to the simplicity of many of these games you tend not to spend much time with them.

REPLAY VALUE
5/10

The good ones are perfect for pick up and play.

LIAM'S SCORES

GAME VARIETY
6/10

With 20 games there is obviously going to be some variety but there are a lot of similar games on here.

GAME QUALITY
6/10

Like Atari Collection 1 this is a mixed bag. Games like Solaris really pushed the 2600 to its limits however games like Air Sea Battle really drag this cart down.

PLAY TIME
4/10

Due to the simplistic nature of the games they are more pickup and play for a quick blast rather than long gaming sessions.

REPLAY VALUE
5/10

There are games like Bowling and Asteroids I come back to every so often but admittedly this cart does sit un-played for long periods.

Now let's see how Vaughan scored the games....

SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1977

DEVELOPER:
LARRY KAPLAN

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
ACTION, SHOOTER

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

3/10

NOTE: This review was written before the Evercade VS existed and no amount of money would get Vaughan to rewrite it.

This game came **built-in on the old Atari 2600** and I do remember vaguely playing it back then. There was a rumour at the time that the Pacific North Fleet experienced a computer melt down as kids played simulated war-games on the Atari.

A shooting gallery that **would honestly play better with two players** as you could at least have some banter while racking up the scores.

The graphics are basic as well as the sound but there are plenty of different levels to choose from, although they are variants of the same theme.

Play as an anti-aircraft gun, ship, bomber etc., with some levels having controllable torpedoes (not as exciting as it sounds) while some are just fire and forget.

Depending on what level you choose will decide if you play on the top or bottom of the screen.

Each level lasts for around two minutes and **it's a case of getting as high a score as you can** in that time.

You are given the left gun to play with which is green (you can hardly see yourself at all on the Evercade screen). That may be my unit and if so please let me know because this was pretty problematic as it was hard to see your gun.

Digital warfare 1977. A pity it's not two players.

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
2/10
Hey, it's 1977.

AUDIO
2/10
Very basic.

GAMEPLAY
4/10
It's musty and needs dusting but there is some here.

FUN FACTOR
4/10
A four for nostalgia.

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

Roberto Garcia-Lago

The Atari 2600 launched in North America in 1977 and along with a small selection of games. One of those was Air-Sea Battle, a home conversion of Atari's own arcade game Anti-Aircraft.

Being a launch title it's rudimentary, featuring basic aim and fire mechanics. Players fire at targets for points by either rotating your stationary gun or sliding left and right, depending on game type. Inspired by Combat, Air-Sea Battle features a large variety of game types such as Anti-aircraft, Torpedo, Shooting Gallery, Polaris, Bomber and Polaris vs. Bomber. Although all game types still retain the basic aim and fire gameplay, the changes in how you aim, what you're shooting at, or whether it's single or multiplayer, do just enough to vary the action. While this is all well and good, playing two players is where the game is the most fun. Two thirds of the game type variations are built exclusively for two players and while gameplay is still a simple scoring competition, expect to have plenty of heated matches with a friend.

However if you want to enjoy Air-Sea Battle's single player on the original Evercade handheld we've got a big problem. As of this writing there's no way to enjoy this on handheld. You see, to play the single player game types you need to use the right controller port on an Atari 2600. This oversight unfortunately renders a good portion of the game unplayable.

The importance of Air-Sea Battle being a launch game for the 2600 can't be understated but beyond the history lesson there's not a whole lot of fun here.

ROBBY SCORES IT 2.5/10

SYSTEM :
ATARI 7800

RELEASED :
1987

DEVELOPER :
ATARI

PUBLISHER :
ATARI

GENRE :
SHOOTER

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

8.5/10

"Hey fellow pilots, well done for surviving the storm of 2600. It was certainly a trying time for us rock pilots. But, and **there is always a but, unfortunately a bigger storm is on its way**".

"The 7800 will go down in history as more of the same but your **onboard graphical display unit is so much more advanced**".

**Takes a breath and looks around the room.*

"**Those rocks look fantastic** as they crash into you".

"And that's a problem for the newbies who are too busy staring at them **before they realise it's too late. BOOM!**"

"Oh and no need for the old sound dampener as your new **upgraded sound system is much kinder on the ears**".

So to sum up, pilots:

Proximity alert sensors sounding

"It's time, pilots. Let's get busy with it!"

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS	AUDIO
10/10	8/10
Beautiful rocks almost balletic in their movements.	*Much improved sound is far kinder on the pilot's ears.*
GAMEPLAY	**FUN FACTOR**
10/10	10/10
A classic game given a (rock) face lift.	*Just a very good game.*

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

Crazy Burger

Asteroids is one of those games that most people must have heard of and probably played in one way or another over the years. On this cart we have the 7800 version that is great fun to play. Improving on the 2600 versions basic graphics and style, this adds more realistic looking asteroids and some nice, nifty effects. The objective is simple enough; destroy all the asteroids that float around space. Stay alive long enough and you might also see some UFOs. Despite not being a huge shoot 'em up fan I still enjoyed this. It's always worth a blast for 5 mins at any time, anywhere (on handheld obviously!)

CRAZY BURGER SCORES IT 7/10

Did You Know? *The Atari 7800 was practically ready to be released in 1984, as shown by the copyright on the Asteroids title screen, but was shelved for 2 years by Atari's new owners, the Tramiels, who wanted to focus on budget computing.*

SYSTEM:
ATARI 7800

RELEASED:
1990

DEVELOPER:
ATARI

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
SPORTS, FIGHTING

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

6.5/10

Now I'll admit I'm not the biggest fan of basketball (to be honest not a fan at all) so please take that into account with a 'punch' of salt. Oh, didn't I mention it was **a brawler as well?**

Well, I say 'brawler' but it's one button, one move which is a punch, and that's it. Using your punch you can **slam dunk your opponents** into the ground while you run up to the net and score. All that fuss and hoopla over running from one net to the other just became street.

Ok so there are two nets suspended at either end of a street court (I'm sure it's court, not pitch). Dunk the ball in the net, score some points, run to the other end, defend some points.

Punch and speed (not that type of speed, these are clean punks) icons occasionally appear on the court. **Pick them up for extra punch or speed power.**

You can play 1 on 1 or 2 on 2, easy to hard, and you can also select from a 1, 3 or 6 minute timer.

Your teammate doesn't really seem to get involved much with the brawling, but he will do a lot of scoring (again they are clean).

Win, and you will progress through the rounds, unless like me you press Y and that resets the whole game. When you have won through to the fourth round it's pretty annoying, let me tell you.

"Ball 'til you fall"

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
10/10
Very good looking players with a nice variety of courts.

AUDIO
4/10
A boombox intro, descending into Atari beeps and noise, which for the 7800 seem rather 2600.

GAMEPLAY
6/10
It's all there just a bit basic and easy. 1 minute matches are far too short.

FUN FACTOR
6/10
I quite enjoyed it.

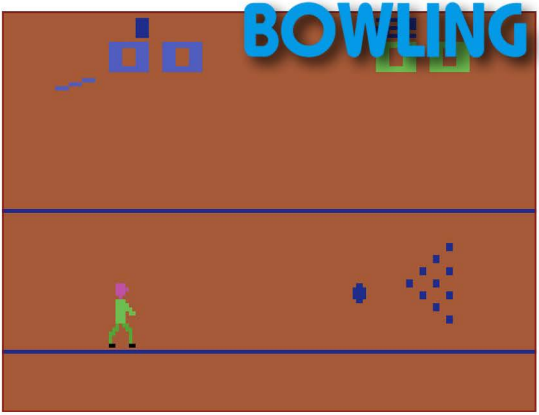
CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

Paul Twist

The first thing you notice about Basketbrawl is that it looks absolutely gorgeous, with large colourful sprites that would these days be referred to as "pixel art" and considered the epitome of indie game cool. Does it play as well as it looks? Not quite. As the title suggests, Battlebrawl is part basketball game and part beat 'em up. Sadly, both elements are fairly thin, with fighting limited to weedy punches executed by pressing A and the sport element comprising basic dribbling and shooting with B. It surprised me that Basketbrawl was released as recently as 1990 on the 2600's less successful successor: the 7800. When compared to Sega and Nintendo output of the same era, it's evident why Atari fell out of favour. So, Basket Brawl is a great-looking but (even by the standards of the time) simplistic game. However it's surprisingly addictive, evoking that "one more go" craving. It's far from a classic but offers slam-dunkin' player-punchin' fun.

PAUL SCORES IT **6/10**



SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1979

DEVELOPER:
LARRY KAPLAN

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
SPORTS

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

3.5/10

NOTE: This review was written before the Evercade VS existed and no amount of money would get Vaughan to rewrite it.

Kip Turner is my name and bowling is my game.

I stand in my lane,
Oh, it may look plain,
But see those pins?
That's points to gain.

Move up and down get my head in the game,
I squint my eyes and ready my aim.

Take two strides forward release my ball,
Apply after touch and watch pins fall.

Strike or Spare and I get to flash,
It's nothing naughty, just me being brash.

The ball rolls back to me to play again,
Keep on going until round ten.

Put on your bowling shoes and get yourself into Kips bowling groove.

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
4/10
Well animated bowler.

AUDIO
2/10
Simple and of its time.

GAMEPLAY
4/10
Pretty standard (but then it is bowling).

FUN FACTOR
4/10
Would benefit from multiplayer (which it has) but the Evercade console doesn't.

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

Karl 'After' Burnett

I ain't gonna beat around the bush, Bowling on the Atari 2600 is about as much fun as the real thing, if you have no limbs. Sure the 2600 wasn't exactly a maths genius, so calculating realistic ball/pin physics was never going to happen, but what we have here is something worse than the pool game I coded at university. In that game, when you hit the cue ball, the rest of the balls would fly off the table in a clump. I thought it was hilarious - my teacher didn't - and now I know how he feels.

There's just nothing about this game that even resembles bowling. Chuck the ball down the lane (okay, that bit resembles bowling a bit) and it doesn't so much knock the pins over as make them vanish. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to how they 'fall' either, which I guess in a way is semi-realistic due to chaos theory and all that, but the results are often decidedly ridiculous. I assume that rather than the Atari's poor old hobbled CPU calculating skittle hits that it does some pseudo-random algorithm to determine whether or not any particular pin should disappear. This makes it seem more than a little unfair - perform what appear to be identical shots (are they called shots in bowling?) and you could get lucky with a strike. Or watch on as the ball mows through a bunch of pins in a line, leaving the rest standing - it's all very unsatisfying. Wee kids might find some fun with this but there are much better games on the cartridge.

KARL SCORES IT 3/10

Did You Know? *We're not the only indie retro video game mag on Amazon. You can also find the awsome NZ Retro run by Karl. NZ Retro is New Zealand's original retro gaming magazine!*

SYSTEM:
ATARI 7800

RELEASED:
1987

DEVELOPER:
ATARI

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
SHOOTER

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

I may have mentioned elsewhere about having to **review the 'same' game within a short space of time and make it sound interesting**, or maybe not, I can't remember. But knowing I have the fixation to let people know the needs and fears of a 'writer' I probably have in some form or another.

So for the '**Fourth time**' here goes. Deep breath and….

Pull on your gardening gloves, adjust those wellies and get that bug blaster ready. It's time to enter the garden **AGAIN**.

Centipede 7800 plays pretty much the same as the 2600 version, so for a more in-depth review please refer to issue 1. Yes, that's a blatant plug but I'm trying to fill the page space here.

Those pesky children, sorry, I mean bugs, are invading your garden **destroying your prize-winning marrows**, your tomatoes that the neighbours stare at in envy and as for your cucumbers don't even get me started. In fact if you didn't know any better it would be sabotage for the upcoming village 'how does your garden grow' competition.

Defend your garden by moving around the bottom third of the screen taking out the invading centipede and its minions.

This time around the bugs look like bugs. Not bugs as in game bugs but actual 'bugs'. You know what I mean.

Your 7800 garden looks so much better than the 2600 garden you used to tend thanks to 'Miracle Grow 7800' and all your hard work, if you can call gardening work. For some it's a vocation, but I wonder again.

Destroy the mushrooms strategically by creating a funnel to **lure the centipede to where you want it to go**. Talking of mushrooms there are the magic kind as well as those that are poisonous.

Hitting the centipede on its bonce will give you more points than a segment of its body. Spiders will try to pounce on you as well so watch out as you get more points for hitting them at a longer range.

Scorpions also wander your garden (Really? Scorpions? Not sure I want to go in that garden…) and if you destroy too many mushrooms then fleas will appear to refill the garden with more mushrooms.

You can also **play this version of Centipede in 2-player mode** (note: I can't test this as I don't have any fellow gardeners to play with, so I'll leave it for other green-fingered colleagues to comment).

At the end of the day it's Centipede and if that's your bag, you'll have fun.

So the same game as Centipede 2600 with more pizazz, the same game as Centipede arcade with less pizazz.

Vaughan's Scores

Graphics	Audio
5/10	5/10
Looks better than the 2600 but not as good as the arcade. Saying that, it does look good.	*In-game shooting effects with arcade bells and whistles, at least it attempts to be.*
Gameplay	**Fun Factor**
9/10	9/10
Still as fresh as a daisy, it is what it is.	*So fun I've written about it 4 times.*

Can We Get A Second Opinion?

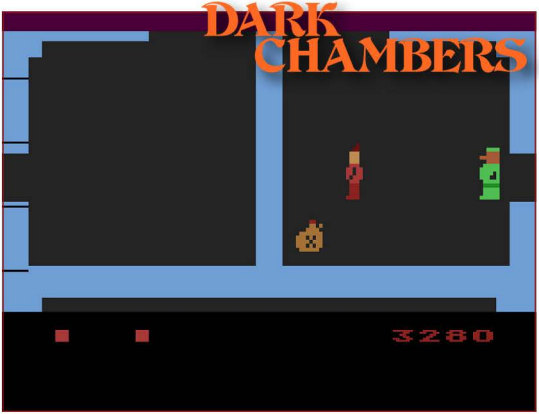
Reviewed by

Crazy Burger

The 7800 is pretty close to the arcade version. It's simple enough to play; destroy the centipede and spiders as they descend and scroll across the screen. Pretty addictive stuff that's unfortunately pretty high in difficulty. It's a good game but I actually preferred the 2600 version!

Crazy Burger scores it 7/10

DARK CHAMBERS



SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1988

DEVELOPERS:
ADAM CLAYTON,
JOHN HOWARD PALEVICH

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
ACTION

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE
4.5/10

The scroll said '**Come and explore the Dark Chamber**'. I forget what I am looking for. It's been a long time in the dark and my memory (8-bit) is not what it was. I suspect I have been stuck down here for a while.

I have been wandering through mazes looking for a way out for quite some time. **The chambers are infested with wizards, skeletons and zombies** intent on doing unspeakable things to me. Let me tell you, I do not hang around to find out what.

Armed with my bow of eight way shooting I have managed to keep myself alive (or dear reader, how would you even be reading this?), indeed I think I am now feared by these denizens of the dark.

I have caught reflections of myself and **boy do I look heroic** in this outfit. Fear me they should, for I bring death.

They seem to spawn from generators and then wander looking for the blood of the living or heroic. That would qualify me for both.

Well, we all wander or, more appropriately, walk slowly around the maze (Hey, it's dark down here. One might have an accident and stub one's toe if we are not too careful).

Nobody is going to help me except myself or my name is not Self Elp (Funny, maybe my parents knew something I didn't).

I have been able to **find weapons and treasure** to keep me alive and I have made certain observations while being alone in the dark.

The monsters seem to have a hierarchy; if you attack one of the more powerful ones, such as a wizard, they will transform into all the lesser monsters before they die. How do undead die? They do and that's all that interests me.

Run slowly (as I stated earlier), walk the gauntlet of the odd baddie or two, be sure to **pick up treasure and look for the way out**.

See you in the light. Farewell.

This cursed ring of slowness makes the journey more of a chore than it needs to be.

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
6/10
Pretty well animated hero and monsters.

AUDIO
4/10
Very basic sounds.

GAMEPLAY
4/10
Replenish ammo and health by exploring.

FUN FACTOR
6/10
If not thrilling, it is entertaining.

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by
Retro Ed UK *(Ed Regan)*

Any games that dish out a single life always strike me as a tad cruel. That said, with this type of dungeon crawler I was quite relieved to arrive at the Game Over screen. The obesity level of the green zombies had no effect on their energy levels as they chased me across the stages. I was quite impressed with the variety of enemies even if they were on the blocky-side. Perhaps games like Gauntlet have spoiled me but even with the power-ups, treasure hunting, and blasting of enemy spawn points, I was yearning (and yawning) for the exit. A shame it wasn't the exit to the next level but instead the exiting of the entire game.

The graphics are basic but in the context of when this was made, one shouldn't grumble. As far as audio, well, the ZX Spectrum loading screens carried a better tune. The gameplay is very slow paced, offering little motivation to progress. Maybe some nostalgia would have helped proceedings as without any, I've had more fun in my loft.

ED SCORES IT 3.5/10

DEMONS TO DIAMONDS

SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1982

DEVELOPER:
NICK TURNER

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
SHOOTER

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

6.5/10

NOTE: This review was written before the Evercade VS existed and no amount of money would get Vaughan to rewrite it.

Stay with me on this one and let me indulge myself a little because **I'm travelling down memory lane here**.

I used to play this with my brother sitting in front of the TV in the early 80s. **I'm not too sure how popular the game was back then** but to him and me it was wonderful.

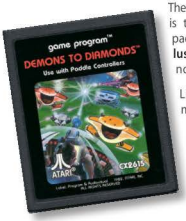
Taking control of your laser turret you have to **shoot the Demons of the same colour which will release Diamonds**. Shooting the Diamonds gains you additional points.

Shooting a Demon of a different colour will turn them into **skulls that will fire back at you**.

The higher up the playing field you shoot, the more points you collect.

The 2nd player's (my brother's) turret would shoot down from the top of the screen. And so the competitive nature of siblings took over.

This game influenced our later years to the extent that when we had card nights through our late teens into middle age, if anybody laid a diamond we would both sing "Demons to Diamonds" at the top of our voices, much to the surprise of others.



The Evercade is one player and there is the d-pad instead of the Atari paddle. **It may have lost some of its lustre** but for me it's still as playable now as then.

Like I said, a personal trip down memory lane.

"Demons to Diamonds" Yes, I'm singing.

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
4/10
Dated to be fair, even while wearing my nostalgia tinted glasses.

AUDIO
4/10
High pitched beeps and grunts. It seems these old ears find it harsh.

GAMEPLAY
6/10
Takes some getting used to but for me it will always be a winner.

FUN FACTOR
6/10
It may be skull-tinted glasses but give it a chance - it's a fun game.

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

Lawrence Bowyer

Demons to Diamonds brings a thinking strategy to the Space Invaders style game. At an initial glance Demons to Diamonds looks like Space Invaders and has the same feel. However there's a clever mechanic with the firing beam that allows you to change the height it reaches. Combine that with the strategy that you must only hit the demons to instantly convert them to diamonds whilst at the same time not hit the white skulls which fire back. Demons to Diamonds looks simple, however it requires careful timing and firing to be successful. The skull locations vary and increase the randomness of the challenge. I liked this game as it makes you think before firing and removes the whole fire and forget mechanic. Even if I do think it looks like a chameleon shooting out its prehensile tongue to catch the demons. Overall this game brings a different spin to the Space Invaders genre.

LAWRENCE SCORES IT 8/10

SYSTEM :
ATARI 7800

RELEASED :
1987

DEVELOPER :
ATARI

PUBLISHER :
ATARI

GENRE :
SHOOTER

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

4.5/10

It's been a **Pharaoh** time since I wrote the original Desert Falcon review for the 2600 and over a year since I submitted the 7800 one. But somewhere in the mists of time the 7800 review went missing so I have once more braved the sands of Egypt to bring you…

cue booming voice **DESERT FALCON 7800**

Hold onto your lute, there is no time for a song now! Stow your cobra and its homely basket safely away because we are about to go on a journey. A journey across ancient sands and up the Nile and let me tell you that journey is murder. Hey monsieur, keep a clear head, it's not the one you may be thinking of. That happens much, much later.

I **sphinx** I may be deviating a little from the point, unlike the Egyptians that built the pyramids and obelisks but not Asterix (sorry, but I left that joke in there to please **Seth**).

Egypt is littered with these structures. Scholars and wise men have long wondered about the purpose but now we know, to hinder the Royal Desert Falcon from completing his mission.

I see you laughing at this wise man's words, but mark them and mark them well, you will be screaming yourself **Horus** as you crash again and again.

Possibly on your mother's side you are magpie because as the Royal Falcon you are out to pilfer, steal or rob any and all treasure that you see. Various desert beasts are out to stop you though and who can blame them? After all it's finders keepers, isn't it? At least from their point of view.

You can fly and hop around on land and so can your adversaries. Keeping an eye on how high they are in relation to you is the art of this game. Match their height and shoot them with your lightning bolts (don't ask).

Hieroglyphics can be picked up to earn yourself special powers and picking up different combinations unlocks various powers.

But… "**BE CAREFUL**" or you may pick up the shackles and that's enough for **Geb** (god of laughter) to take the piss out of you (metaphorically).

After defeating the sphinx you have a bonus level where you can steal, er sorry, collect as much treasure as possible.

And here the scrolls stop. I am sorry but it looks like you are going to have to play, yes play, the game yourselves, and for that I am truly sorry.

The sands of time buried this 'treasure' for a reason.
It's not for man or gods to go digging them back up.

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
4/10

Ptah *certainly tried hard to make the game look better than its 2600 sibling.*

AUDIO
4/10

Ihy *says the sound has improved and I am not one to argue with the gods.*

GAMEPLAY
5/10

Hathor *did her best but even gods have their limitations on the 7800.*

FUN FACTOR
4/10

I have heard it said that you would have more fun visiting ***Osiris****.*

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by
Crazy Burger

Desert Falcon is an isometric shooter that was one of the launch games on the Atari 7800. We also have the 2600 version on Atari Collection 1 although the 7800 version is far superior in every way. It's certainly far more playable as you fly around as the falcon. Conveniently you can also fire lightning bolts from your beak to take out the many enemies. At times it's difficult to tell if the enemies are in your line of sight which can result in multiple deaths. There are collectibles that help provide invincibility, extra firepower etc. but overall it felt like the objective of the game was unclear.

CRAZY BURGER SCORES IT **5/10**

HAUNTED HOUSE

SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1981

DEVELOPER:
ATARI

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
ACTION, ADVENTURE

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

7.5/10

Standing in a dark room with the only light coming from my matches, **I don't mind telling you I am terrified**.

It was silly really. My friends had goaded me, dared me, to explore old man Grave's house. I didn't want to look cowardly in front of them so I climbed in through one of the broken windows and set off exploring.

After bumping into one of those **scarily large spiders**, much to my shame like a frightened child I ran away, and now here I am **lost and alone**.

The matches are not only my light source but also my sanity. Something tells me on later levels you can't even see the walls and **matches become finite, so I must take care** when I strike them.

Scrabbling around **I found keys that open doors** and at one stage I had a sceptre that seemed to ward off a nest of spiders I stumbled upon and those frightening bats. **Oh, how I hate bats!**

I somehow know I need to **find the Urn** that's said to hold the soul of old man Graves and only then will the house let me escape.

When I hear the wind howl it's almost as if the house itself is telling me **something evil is near**.

Oh my god it's howling now!

What's that I see? Oh no, is that…?

Yes it is.

Mr Graves has found me!

"During the day, I don't believe in ghosts. At night, I'm a little more open-minded."

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
8/10
Scooby-Doo style googly eyes is the highlight of a simple game.

AUDIO
8/10
Howl's this for atmosphere; footsteps and howling wind.

GAMEPLAY
8/10
Just like Dante said, there are nine levels of hell.

FUN FACTOR
10/10
Ex-screamly good fun.

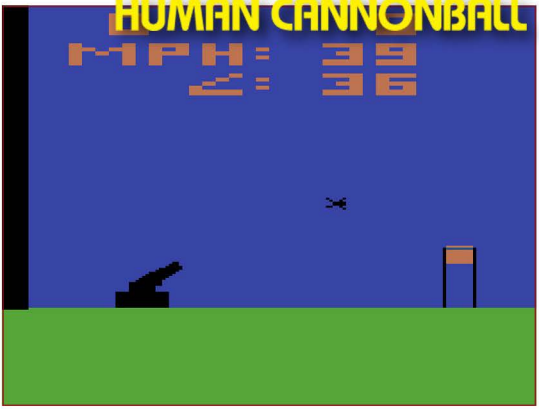
CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

Lawrence Bowyer

With the arrival of the Atari 2600 console in 1977, Haunted House made its way to the console in 1981 bringing similarities to the highly popular and well received Adventure cartridge. The quest is basic; move around the haunted house and search for the broken urn pieces, assemble them and leave. Quite simple really, but like all haunted houses it's full of darkness! Using matches in your possession you illuminate the walls and avoid the array of baddies as you are not Alone in the Dark. Different items protect you in different ways and you have to decide what to use and when to use them. For example the magic sceptre makes you immune to baddies. Overall the game is certainly challenging and if you use your imagination it helps too. If you understand what you are doing the game can be a lot of fun. The manual included with the cartridge doesn't really explain enough about the game though. There's a lot of depth in the game which makes it a lot of fun if you're willing to persevere and see past the rudimentary graphics.

LAWRENCE SCORES IT 7/10



SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1979

DEVELOPER:
ATARI

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
STRATEGY

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

2.5/10

Somewhere back in the mists of time, **brave, silly or desperate men** and ladies used to earn a living by being fired out of a cannon, attempting to land in a pool, tub or bucket of water.

Now you too can feel that excitement, the smell of gunpowder, the cheer of the crowd. Come on sonny, step right up and feel the thrill.

A cannon sitting on a block **aims, well, vaguely pointing in the direction of the bucket**. It's your job to aim for it.

Now take your time, lick your finger and put it in the air to check the wind speed. Then and only then alter your cannon's firing trajectory.

Make sure you're happy, check the neck strap on your helmet and relax your limbs to lessen the shock.

Pull the cooooooooorrrrrrddddddd!
Crash! Bang! Plop.

Vaughan's Scores

Graphics
2/10

Maybe one too many head injuries makes this look worse than it actually is? Nah, it looks awful.

Audio
2/10

Less a cannon more a damp squib.

Gameplay
2/10

Alter height, alter cannon position, alter pool size, alter level (Oh, some even have walls with holes in for the more daring daredevil among you). Pull the cord. Job done.

Fun Factor
2/10

To be honest there is very little to be had.

Can We Get A Second Opinion?

Reviewed by

David Phillips

the_lynx_cader

The artwork on Human Cannonball has an Evel Knievel look about it. The gentleman in the artwork is pure 70s/80s with a moustache that is reminiscent of Erik Downies (Erik: Why thank you). This is going to be retro heaven. Then I pressed start. Not quite the fun packed game I thought it would be. The aim of the game is simple - shoot your little man into a bucket. That is basically it. There are variations to the game, for example you can add a wall to make the game more difficult and the cannon moves in various locations (The cannon actually looks like a snapped Atari joystick). You can have a few minutes of fun with this game but with no real depth, things get tiresome quickly.

David Scores It 3/10

Did You Know? *We could have seen this game on Atari Arcade. Owen Rubin was developing an arcade prototype at Atari called Cannonball in 1976. You tried to fire the daredevil through a hole in a wall but the splat sounds and crumpled stick man were deemed too violent and the game was cancelled.*

SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1984

DEVELOPER:
ATARI

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
SHOOTER

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

At first glance you **could be forgiven for thinking this is Centipede**. At a second glance you might think **it plays just like Centipede**.

To be honest it's pretty similar but as with all sequels **if it is not broken don't try to fix it** (just change it a little).

This time you are **Archer the Elf defending your garden** from ravenous hordes of insects including the titular millipede.

Elfish pest control is a job no self respecting elf wants. They would rather be off on quests for rings, rescuing princesses, drinking with dwarves or dancing the night away drinking elfish wine.

But hey, you have to do what you're good at; at least that's what Archer has been told. A job that does not feature in a bard's playlist and no learned scribes have seen fit to record into legend.

Stand in the lower part of the screen, **take aim and introduce those pesky insects to your arrows**. Take out your frustrations on the garden's wildlife.

Spiders, bees, earwigs, inchworms, ladybugs and dragon-(don't get excited Archer)-flies with everybody's favourite malaria spreading insect Mosquitos.

And that aggressive millipede from the games title, which is also a bone of contention with **Archer, who in his mind is the hero and he has to play second fiddle to an insect.** Shooting the millipede anywhere except his head will split the elf-munching insect in two and so becomes double the trouble.

Each critter has its own movement pattern and it's essential you become familiar with them.

With dynamite liberally spread around the garden you can use it to your advantage when things get hectic.

So the same game as Centipede with more insects to splat.

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
4/10
More variety than its prequel.

AUDIO
6/10
Sounds like an old arcade machine trying to tempt gamers with their coins to the back of the dark hall.

GAMEPLAY
8/10
Fresh as a daisy.

FUN FACTOR
10/10
Fun, yes, but more of the same.

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

Paul Twist

Although the technical limitations of the Atari 2600 mean that the graphics of Millipede are greatly simplified from the arcade original, with 2D coloured blocks replacing the well-defined mushrooms and insects of the arcade original, this conversion does actually manage to replicate its big brother's gameplay reasonably well. It even manages to recreate the foreboding sense of impending doom as the titular millipede advances down the screen towards you. The sound is also suitably atmospheric. As for the game itself, this sequel to Centipede clearly owes a huge debt to Space Invaders, and though it lacks the simple timeless elegance of that game, it's still eminently playable today. However, if you have the Atari Arcade cart you'll also have access to the arcade original of Millipede which offers a superior experience in every way, making the Atari 2600 port somewhat redundant. This version of Millipede remains playable enough but it's rather basic and utterly inessential.

PAUL SCORES IT 5/10

SYSTEM:
ATARI 7800

RELEASED:
1989

DEVELOPER:
JAMES V. ZALEWSKI

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
ARCADE, SHOOTER

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

5.5/10

The Earth is under attack (again)! The unknown alien menace is here and intent on destruction. At least you think so because they haven't actually told you why they are here.

It doesn't really matter they are **alien scum and need wiping out**, just board your fighter ship and let's do this.

A top down vertical scroller with a lovely variety of alien ships intent not only on destroying you but also on slipping past and **weakening the Earth's defence field.**

That green bar you see as part of your HUD is the strength of the defence field and when that's taken down the Earth is at the alien's mercy, resulting in losing the war.

They come at you right from the start, each observing their own attack pattern; **the aliens are relentless in their pursuit of victory**. Be aware, some ships that fly past you and disappear off the bottom of the screen fly back up when you are least expecting it and shoot you in the rear, **like the cowardly alien scum they are.**

Power ups drop in the form of containers but be careful not to blow them up. The more trigger-happy have been known to waste these valuable resources.

Picking up these containers provides anything from laser power in the form of an autofire to shields, for you or the Earth.

Warps are also dropped that must be collected in threes, either one of each colour in easy mode or three of the same in hard mode. This will speed you towards, or rather warp you on to, that galaxy's boss.

You are Earth's first and only line of defence. Do your duty, pilot.

```
...it's you against the ALIEN BRIGADE...
   COMING SOON FOR YOUR ATARI 7800
```

Did You Know? *Planet Smashers was kind of a prequel to Alien Brigade on Atari Collection 1. When you complete the game you are informed that alien infested humans are hidden around the world and it's your job to defeat them*

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
8/10
Impressive alien scumbags.

AUDIO
4/10
A poor weedy laser sound that becomes annoying.

GAMEPLAY
8/10
It's a hard game even on easy and even once you master the power up system it's still hard.

FUN FACTOR
10/10
A fun high score chasing game.

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by
Retro Ed UK *(Ed Regan)*

Looks can be deceiving with this vertical shooter. Although it carries the common "save the Earth from aliens" theme, the underlying components are actually fairly creative. As well as the Earth's shield depleting if you let enemies fly past you, you also have to unlock a colour combination to transport directly to the boss. The sound is particularly poor and after some title music, which resembles a 5 year old me sitting on my childhood Bontempi keyboard, we're left with an uninspiring bleep every time you fire. The weapons could have done with an uplift with the first power-up being a lacklustre autofire. Watch out for the bosses; surely the gaming genesis of a bullet-hell! The graphics albeit slightly empty in space the enemy designs are rather nice. The audio is an earache-inducing arrangement. As far as the gameplay goes the 3 colour-code and Earth shield approach offers something I haven't seen elsewhere. Overall a bit blah.

ED SCORES IT 4.5/10

SYSTEM :
ATARI 2600

RELEASED :
1989

DEVELOPER :
ATARI

PUBLISHER :
ATARI

GENRE :
SHOOTER

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

5.5/10

You are the daring pilot of a delta-winged jet fighter.

After taking off from the runway **you must destroy some weird flying shapes** that are intent on blowing you from the skies (well, I mean they will buzz around and ignore you if you let them) but for dramatic purposes we will stick to **savage aerial dogfights**.

Use missiles to take out bigger shapes (planes) when they appear. You'll know this because your radar will change colour.

On later missions you will have **proximity missiles at your disposal**, that's if you really want to stick around that long.

Then you get to fly to your mid-air refuelling, I mean docking station. Do this before you run out of gas and plummet from the sky.

There is a highway somewhere to the Danger Zone! Unfortunately this is more of a B road to the local park.

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
2/10
Mig-ing some flare.

AUDIO
4/10
Not that pleasant to listen to.

GAMEPLAY
4/10
Less of a delta wing more Kitty Hawk.

FUN FACTOR
2/10
Tally Noooooo.

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

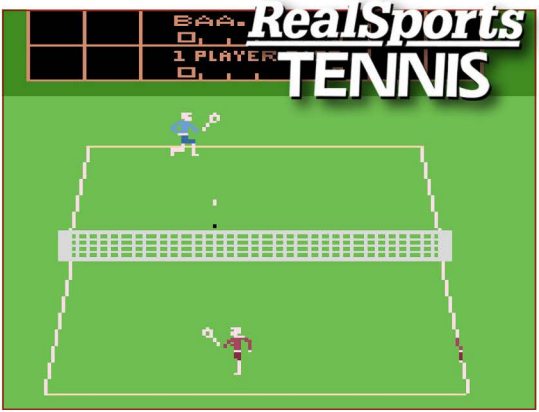
David Phillips

the_lynx_cader

Radar Lock is one of the better 2600 games I've played. You assume the role of a jet fighter pilot and must battle in air-to-air combat. You fight wave after wave of enemies which naturally get harder as you progress through the levels. The gameplay is fun and frantic, I would say even addictive once you know what you are doing. Learn how to fuel up at the end of the missions or it will be game over before you know it. This is a good game for its era and well worth playing. I can see myself going back to this one once I've watched Top Gun 2. The Evercade can be my wingman anytime.

DAVID SCORES IT 7.5/10

Did You Know? *Doug Neubauer, one of the developers on Solaris, re-used the game engine when creating Radar Lock. Although the games look very similar they play very differently with Radar Lock being Atari's homage to Sega's Afterburner.*



SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1983

DEVELOPER:
ATARI

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
SPORTS, TENNIS

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

4.5/10

NOTE: This review was written before the Evercade VS existed and no amount of money would get Vaughan to rewrite it.

Hey, **what is all that racket** about?

We have only been challenged to a game of Real Sports Tennis.

Select your speed, fast or slow, input your name (keep it clean) and then play.

The contest is broken down into two sections of six rounds and it is the first to win both sections.

Two players on a court with just a net separating them, No, really there is just a net and a base line.

But that is something one can live with **a game that is this serviceable**.

The players look rather natty running around after the ball in their 70s tennis outfits. The ball also moves smoothly with its matching shadow, making lining up a shot relatively easy.

To be fair the game as with most sports titles would benefit from two players, but I have to 'line judge' it on a single player experience.

"The older I get, the better I used to be." - John McEnroe.

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
6/10
Mainly for the players.

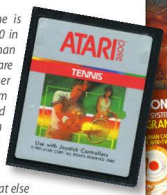
AUDIO
2/10
Mostly beeps with a high-pitched victory ditty.

GAMEPLAY
6/10
It doesn't Pong!

FUN FACTOR
6/10
I de-deuce it's a fun little game.

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

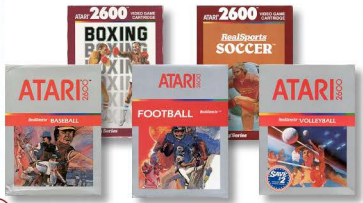
Reviewed by
Mark Rutland



In terms of ranking, this one is not going to make the top 10 in the world, but RealSports Tennis is better than you think if you give it a chance. Graphics are incredibly basic and the sound isn't much either but it does have a fairly unique control system where you only press a button to serve and then further shots are returned depending on your position and direction of travel. With a bit of practice, it's more controllable than you think. It's never going to win Wimbledon but it's a 2600 game after all and considering what else was on the system in 1983 it's not that bad and worth a game or two.

MARK SCORES IT 4/10

Did You Know? *RealSports Tennis was one of six games in the RealSport series released on the Atari 2600. You can also find Boxing, Baseball, Football, Volleyball and Soccer (i.e. proper football).*



SOLARIS

SYSTEM :
ATARI 2600

RELEASED :
1986

DEVELOPER :
ATARI

PUBLISHER :
ATARI

GENRE :
SHOOTER, SIMULATOR

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE
8/10

This is the sequel to Star Raiders only this time with a rather snazzy behind the cockpit view.

Using your tactical grid you once again **plot your route around the galaxy** deciding where you are going to strike at the enemy.

Be prepared for **battles both planet side and in the depths of space**. Unfortunately your ship is rather fuel hungry, a bit of a gas giant guzzler. Forgive the sun, I mean pun. So **fuel management has to be taken into account** or you will lose a life.

Rather **impressive 3D type graphics** make up the aliens and planets as they fly out the screen towards you. Have the graphics dated? Yes they have but they are still pretty effective today.

With various aliens to face including pirates, mechanoids and cobra ships there is **plenty to keep you occupied**. Also there are different planets you can fly to, from friendlies where you can refuel to **Death Star type corridors strewn with deadly obstacles** (who thinks it's a good idea to build these things?).

On some planets there are space cadets that need help and if you **rescue cadets in need** you will be rewarded with an extra life

The sound is really rather good with warping engines, alien noises and impressive laser sounds. It all adds to the game.

At one stage this was going to be a game based on 'The Last Starfighter'.

Did You Know? *Atari reused the cover art from Star Raiders, which was released 4 years earlier in 1982, when creating the Solaris box artwork.*

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
8/10
"Impressive" a Dark Lord was once heard to say.

AUDIO
8/10
"Impressive very" a green Master once to say heard.

GAMEPLAY
8/10
"Worth your time and space" a Lord of Time will be heard to say.

FUN FACTOR
6/10
"I've always wanted to fight a desperate battle against incredible odds!" said Grig. (Look him up)

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by
Retro Ed UK *(Ed Regan)*

Who'd have thought that the 2600 could house a space simulation game? There's an incredible amount of variety and depth in this game as you cautiously travel the universe and battle enemy forces whilst deploying some strategic intent!! Keeping an eye on fuel levels as you navigate the map is essential. The 3D effect during the third person stages is quite remarkable and at times it feels like every colour in the 2600's arsenal has been deployed. The space battles are a joy and the radar concept feels like a precursor to later flying games such as X-Wing. This title made me realise what the 2600 was truly capable of. The 2600 has gone full-throttle with this title. There may be no soundtrack, however the sounds of the thruster and your blasters are exactly how you'd imagine they should be. An optimal medley of strategy and space shooting make this a go-to game on the cart.

ED SCORES IT 8.5/10

SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1988

DEVELOPER:
ROBERT C. POLARO

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
RACING, ACTION

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

4.5/10

NOTE: This review was written before the Evercade VS existed and no amount of money would get Vaughan to rewrite it.

RC car racing on top down tracks, yes please. You can choose between bump and grind actually. No sorry, I mean crash and bounce, on the start menu.

You can choose between 1 or 2 players but sadly you're going to have to play by yourself.

Select between 9 tracks and then you can choose if that track is tarmac, dirt or ice so you could count that as, er, 24 tracks? (Editor: 27. We'll let that one 'slide'. Ice track, see? No? Oh, ok…)

Hold down A and away you go! **Race around the track and it's the first to cross the finish line.** Hey, this is a race after all!

Two little blue squares will bestow speed or traction to aid you (I'm not sure aid is the correct term) and a large vertical line at various points on the track will slow your car right down.

Basic graphics and slightly better sound, with engine noises and the odd shriek or two, but all is not lost (unless you come last or even second). Buried somewhere not too deep is the gameplay which although not great, as the car is hard to control at speed, but it's there (just like a TomTom), you just have to look for it.

Nonetheless it is **pretty addictive trying to beat the course** and I imagine if you were playing against a mate it would be a better game, creating a little friendly competition.

I will say when there are jumps on the course, if you're not aligned straight on, you will just crash. (Well, come to a complete halt until you line yourself up) By the time you do this your opponent is so far ahead you may as well give up, which makes it really rather annoying.

When you plan to meet your best friend with your new remote controlled car, he brings round his Ferrari and you drive your Skoda behind a bush. Drop the control and say you forgot to bring yours.

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
2/10
Pretty basic from 1988.

AUDIO
2/10
Boy racer engine noises.

GAMEPLAY
4/10
Courses for horses or RCs.

FUN FACTOR
4/10
I'm conscious that it's an old game, hey this is a retro mag, and I will say there is a little fun to be had here.

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

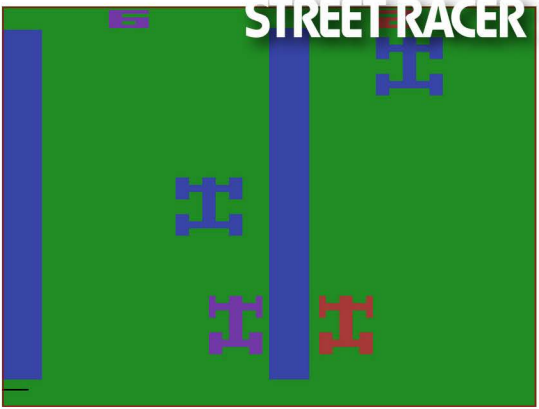
Christian Howard *(aka The Cameo Kid)*

ImCrimsonHowler

The year is 1988 and racing game RC Pro-Am is out on the NES and Famicom Grand Prix II: 3D Hot Rally for the Famicom Disk System. But for my birthday I got Sprint Master on the Atari 2600 and back then I was OK with that. So I decided to take a trip back with the Evercade VS just to see how good or bad I remember this game… Oh yes, the little red and blue cars going round and round the small track using the d-pad (looks more like spaceships than cars). Oh the fun, I remember now, it's almost like a slot car race track but on your TV. Collecting those little boxes to get a speed boost is a pain but worth it. The sound for this game is not the worst but it's not great. The gameplay for the time should have been better based on other games released on newer systems. After replaying with my kids this game is great, given the age and the system, and we had a blast. Def something I will keep playing for sure.

CHRISTIAN SCORES IT 6/10

STREET RACER



SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1977

DEVELOPER:
ATARI

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
RACING

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

2/10

Standing in the street looking at my car **I am wondering if it's really worth the effort**.

She will not thank me for saying so but **she is old, 1977 old**, and her basic pixelated lines have not aged well at all. Her once proud looks are now nothing but a dull and faded paint job.

"Well it's not the looks, **it's what's under the hood that counts**," I say to myself. Hoping for something as I turn the key in the ignition.

Nope that doesn't sound good at all, she's in serious need of a tune up.

Looking at the competition they don't look in any better condition, **time has not been kind**.

I glance at the racing schedule I have in my hand.

'**Man and machine being tested to the limit**' the title proudly declares.

Street racing, slalom, dodgem, each event there to entice the audience to part with their money.

"Ah, who am I kidding," I crumple the schedule up and toss it in the bin.

"Your racing days are over baby," I mumble.

I am waiting in line at the World Famous Gold & Silver Pawn Shop ready to cut myself a deal.

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
2/10
Her once proud looks are rather dated.

AUDIO
2/10
The tape deck has seen better days.

GAMEPLAY
2/10
Nothing left in the tank.

FUN FACTOR
2/10
Fun is a faded memory.

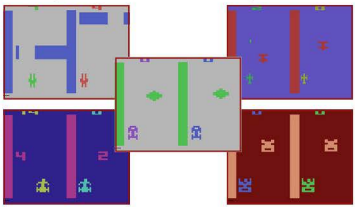
CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by
David Phillips
the_lynx_cader

If there's one thing that Atari did well with some of these games it's the artwork. The cool cover with cars and a motorcycle really sucks you in. You think that you will be playing an exciting and awesome game. Street Racer is neither. It's a top-down view game and not your typical racer as the title suggests. You earn points by avoiding hazards. There are multiple game modes to choose from but they all feel the same while looking marginally different. Evade or destroy the hazards to win points, not much else to it. This game, for me, is not enjoyable. The controls are poor and the enemies are sometimes impossible to avoid. Not a game that I will be revisiting anytime soon. Maybe it's more fun in 2 player mode or with a paddle.... but I highly doubt it.

DAVID SCORES IT 2/10

Did You Know? *as well as the Street Racer game mode shown above there is also Slalom, Dodgem, Jet Shooter, Number Cruncher and Scoop Ball too!*



SUBMARINE COMMANDER

SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
1982

DEVELOPER:
ATARI

PUBLISHER:
SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.

GENRE:
SHOOTER, SIMULATION

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

3.5/10

During the war I was a submarine commander. It was my job to hunt out convoys and **send them down to meet Davy Jones**.

Up periscope I used to call when we were about to strike.

The ships are out there somewhere and sometimes if we were lucky **it became a bit of a duck hunt**.

Destroy as many of the ships as you can before your fuel runs out. Vessels will steam across your screen so **anticipate where you need to fire** your torpedoes.

Watch out for the enemies' fire and depth charges or it will be you visiting Davy's locker.

We are hit and taking on water. Lots of water!

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
4/10
Yes, there are some.

AUDIO
4/10
'Noise' is a submarine term.

GAMEPLAY
4/10
I get that sinking feeling.

FUN FACTOR
4/10
Battle stations! (At least for a minute or two).

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

Allan Benzies *(aka Sternhammer)*

I didn't grow up with Atari. I was an Amstrad kid and then from the age of ten I became a Sega Mega Drive kid but I do have vague memories playing some Atari games. So getting the Atari carts for me has been a really interesting experience. Some games like Yars' Revenge, Asteroids and Missile Command have proven to me that when a game is really good, it will always be good! Unfortunately Submarine Commander doesn't fall into this category.

It's actually a bit more advanced looking than some 2600 games and reminds me a little bit of Battlezone or Robot Tank as you're looking through a view scope to fire at your enemies, but both those games are way better. The idea of the game is you're looking through your periscope and firing at ships above you causing them to sink.

The up and down view screen seems like a cool addition at first but quickly becomes annoying when you start missing ships below your view. The audio is crunchy and irritating to listen to and any time I tried to play this I found myself turning it off after just a few minutes. On the plus side the graphics for a 2600 game are not bad, but this one just doesn't stand the test of time in my opinion.

ALLAN SCORES IT 3/10

Did You Know? *We never saw a commercial release of this game in Europe. Although Atari developed the game it was actually a Sears exclusive in North America for their rebranded 2600, the Telegames Video Arcade.*

WIZARD

SYSTEM:
ATARI 2600

RELEASED:
2005

DEVELOPER:
CHRIS CRAWFORD

PUBLISHER:
ATARI

GENRE:
ADVENTURE, ACTION

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

4/10

Surveying my labyrinth, I know those pesky imps are out there somewhere.

They can fire spells faster than me and they can travel through my labyrinths walls. Well they are fairy folk.

Oh! And I cannot see them either. I did have something for that but I seemed to have mislaid my scroll of all seeing. So for now I will have to **settle for listening**. Yes, for you see, my hearing is very good.

They think they can surprise me, the folk of the fairy, but **it's their hearts that forewarn me**. Yes, the beat of their hearts gives them away.

The faster the beat, the closer they are. I can feel their excitement as they anticipate killing me, **the greatest mage in all Irata**, and finally laying claim to my labyrinth.

The spell of prototype does not always bring release, only a Flashback or 2;)

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
2/10
Spellbindingly dull.

AUDIO
4/10
An extra magic point for the heartbeat.

GAMEPLAY
2/10
No need to aim your spell. Well, you can't. It just goes in the correct direction.

FUN FACTOR
2/10
I could lie and say THE MOST FUN YOU'LL EVER HAVE IN A LABYRINTH but then there's that time Elsa and I...

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

David Phillips

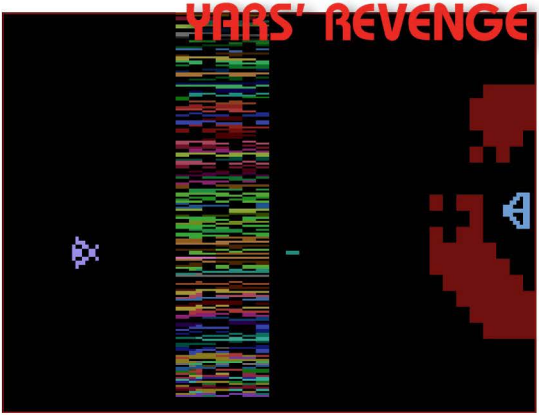
the_lynx_cader

This is an early tactical shooter. You play the Wizard and must kill the evil imp. The Wizard is nothing more than a matchstick man and the imp is displayed as a spinning spiral. Originally programmed in the 80s but not released until 2005, they could have put some polish on it. That said, this is not a terrible game. You play in a maze setting where you must shoot, hide, recharge your weapon and (I think) try to stop the imp from touching a flame. You both shoot at each other and the first player with 100 points of damage will die. I can see people enjoying this more in a 2 player setting, especially if you are competitive. A game that can produce some magic in short blasts.

DAVID SCORES IT 5/10

Did You Know? *Wizard was never released on the Atari 2600. It was left as a forgotten prototype until it was included on the Atari Flashback 2 some 25 years later. The developer, Chris Crawford, had no idea the game had finally seen the light of day until he was emailed by a fan.*

YARS' REVENGE



SYSTEM :
ATARI 2600

RELEASED :
1982

DEVELOPER :
ATARI

PUBLISHER :
ATARI

GENRE :
SHOOTER, ACTION

MEDIA

Manual available at Evercade.info

OVERALL SCORE

7/10

Qotile is out for a relaxing stroll around the cosmos. A delegation of creatures from the system have flown out to meet him. At least that's what Qotile had presumed.

After the intergalactic niceties had been observed, part of which consisted of drinking tea and dunking biscuits, the talking began.

Having complimented them on their area of the galaxy, **Qotile asked if it was OK if he relocated here**. Having not been the best at alien languages he listened intently and from their incoherent gabble he picked out the word '**Yar**' on more than one occasion. **So with a sense of happiness he began to move in**.

The Yars were understandably a little peeved at this and decided to let Qotile know in no uncertain terms how they felt about it.

The final battle has come down to an area of space where **the neutral zone splits itself in half**. Qotile sits behind a shield that changes as levels progress. **He will fire a homing missile** that will follow the Yar around the screen but if they hide in the flashing neutral zone the missile is, well, neutralised, funnily enough.

Qotile can also **change himself into a swirl that will destroy the Yar**, even if the tea-drinking cowards are hiding in that blasted neutral zone. But those pesky Yar have found a way to defeat him. They fly around the screen buzzing away like insects (ok, they are insects) **shooting away at his shields**.

If they nibble or shoot a shield or part of him, the mighty Qotile, they gain a **one shot Zorlon Cannon**. If fired at the right time it will destroy he who cannot be destroyed, the mighty QOTILE (but not Zorlon proof). You can hear his cosmic laugh boom; it can also kill the Yar just as easily if they are caught in the blast.

Stupid insects! Mwahaha!

And so the war among the stars plays out.

An Easter egg is hidden in the game. You can see it when Qotile is killed while in Swirl form by the Zorlon Cannon (Try saying that out loud while standing on one leg).

VAUGHAN'S SCORES

GRAPHICS
6/10
Animated Yar, a swirling Qotile and a breakout wall.

AUDIO
6/10
Beeps of various types and a crashing white noise explosion.

GAMEPLAY
8/10
Master where you can fire from and use the screen to loop between the top and the bottom.

FUN FACTOR
10/10
A classic game that still plays well today.

CAN WE GET A SECOND OPINION?

Reviewed by

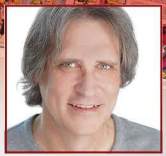
Retro Ed UK *(Ed Regan)*

Galactic insects, Zorlon Cannons, and an evil Qotile. What's not to like? This title is further evidence that gameplay trumps over graphics. With such smooth gameplay and steadily increasing difficulty levels this is one deliciously addictive game. Developing strategies such as flying off screen are a must, as well as knowing when best to retreat to the Neutral Zone. Even the primitive-looking explosions between levels are a reason to punch the air. Definitely a game to return to in an attempt to keep bettering that score. The graphics are simple yet does exactly what is required. As far as audio there is a humming in the background and laser blasts really help immerse you into the game. The gameplay is simple yet highly addictive; solid controls with a very innovative level approach. Yars' Revenge has stood the test of time and is still a joy to play.

ED SCORES IT 7/10

All Rhoades lead to Atari !

*In this interview, April takes the opportunity to talk to former Atari creative writer **Scott Rhoades** about his life and work.*



Hi Scott, many thanks for agreeing to this interview, we really appreciate this chance to talk to you. Firstly, I would like to start by asking you to tell our readers a little about yourself?

I'm from the San Francisco Bay Area, although I now live in Utah, where I work for Adobe. I lead the Adobe Experience Platform doc team.

When I'm not writing for work, I'm writing for myself. I've published some short stories and poems, I'm working on my seventh "pre-published" novel, and also work on the staff for a local writing conference. Most of my fiction in the last several years has been written for middle grade readers, which in the U.S. means about ages 8-13.

My Covid project has been learning guitar, mainly because I also want to write songs. I tried about 20 years ago, but had trouble working it into my life at the time. I have an excellent teacher now, Billy Hinsche, who used to play with the Beach Boys and before that was a teen idol with Dino, Desi & Billy.

I'm also grateful to the Brits for inventing rounders, because I'm a big baseball fan. I follow the Oakland Athletics. So, thanks!

Can you remember your first memories of computer games and how they impacted you?

When I was in school, before video games were even really a thing, my mom was taking a computer course. I went with her once to the Stanford University computer lab, which was also used by other universities in the area. She showed me how to use the phones and those big old modems to connect to the mainframe from the terminals in the lab and I played games like Dungeon, Lemonade Stand, Moon Lander, and Hunt the Wumpus. This was the old days when we didn't even have monitors. All responses came back on the printer.

Later, my dad bought a Pong game for the TV, and after that--I think my last year in high school--we got a Sears Telegames System, which was a rebranded Atari 2600. I went away to college not long after that. I had fun with it when I was home.

Do you have a favourite game or games and why?

I still love Atari Adventure, even now. I bought it for that Atari machine in high school. I was really into fantasy, especially Tolkien, and thought that game was great. I still do, especially level 3 where everything is random and that stupid bat keeps stealing stuff. Other games I've really gotten into over the years include Sid Meier's Pirates and Roller Coaster Tycoon.

I had a C64 back in the 80s and played a lot of games on that. I was especially fond of dungeon crawl games like Wizardry and the Apshai trilogy. Oh, and being a writer and reader, I also really enjoy interactive fiction, especially the old Infocom games, although I wish I could claim to be better at them than I am. I've played around with writing my own a couple of times but have never gotten very far.

How did you end up working at Atari?

I had just graduated from university with a double major, English and German, and hoped to find a writing job of some kind. After a few months of searching, I answered an ad for an editor position at Atari and got it. Funny thing is, even though I liked computers, I thought of tech writing and editing as a temporary thing. 32 years on, I guess I should start considering it a career.

What did your day-to-day consist of?

Since I was hired as an editor, I spent a lot of time editing things like manuals, point-of-sale ads, and other written materials that were produced by Atari Creative Services. They quickly saw that I could also write well and write quickly, so I got writing assignments too, but I always edited as well.

On my desk I had a 1040ST that I used for my writing and for the ST software I documented. I also had an XE Game System I used for 7800 games and the few very late 2600 games I worked on. I also had an Atari PC for the occasional IBM-compatible software. And, of course, once we started working on the Lynx, I had a Lynx and a Pinky Mandy system.

Typically, when writing a manual, I had the software to play with and some notes and specs from the programmers. I'd play or test out the software (it wasn't always games) to get a feel for it, then start writing.

When I started, there were two writers and me, the editor. Because I also wrote, when one of the writers left, we didn't hire another one. I just wrote more in addition to editing. Everything the other writers wrote came across my desk for editing. I wrote manuals, box copy, the Lynx poster manuals, and the occasional bit of ad copy. I also worked on corporate materials, like annual reports.

What was Atari like to work for during your time there?

Atari under the Tramiels had a very get-it-out-quickly attitude. There was always quite a bit of pressure to work quickly but I was used to that from school, so I fit in. Typically, I'd get an assignment--a new game for example--and I would have to write it and have it to the typesetter within a few days. Sometimes I'd do three or four games in a week.

Atari was full of characters, especially in Creative Services. From the Tramiels on down, a lot of the people I worked with were characters. Especially for a kid right out of school, the Tramiels were bigger than life and more than a little intimidating. There was no question who the bosses were.

Then the head of Creative Services--my manager's boss, so my main boss--was Mel Stevens. Mel was this old-time advertising guy from New York with a strong accent and a gravelly, often loud, voice. My direct manager was a career military guy who had been an Army journalist. I ran into him years later at a conference, although I didn't realize it at first because he had transitioned to a woman, which I think is fine, but not something I would have expected. She died a few years ago. I actually owe her quite a lot for teaching me how to be a technical writer and starting me on my career.

The other writer was cool. I liked her. We became friends but she was also a unique person in some ways I don't feel comfortable revealing without her permission. The important thing is, we enjoyed working together. She was a good writer and we used to bounce ideas off each other.

Our main typesetter would sometimes bring in one of her biker friends to help out. There was a third typesetter who'd come in when things were really busy. They usually had to go look for him when they needed him, in the places where he'd hang out when he was drunk, which was apparently a lot of the time. I didn't know him very well, but he added another character to the list.

This all combines to give me memories of Atari unlike anywhere else I've ever worked. Being surrounded by unusual, creative people was a positive experience, mostly. It's fun being around people who are a little different. Not everybody was strange, I got along pretty well with the programmers, and I really liked John Skruch, who led game development. I liked him a lot. I'm sad he's gone.

But the thing I remember most is the pressure. Mel was loud and demanding, a very old-school advertising guy, like somebody out of the Mad Men TV program. He'd been with the Tramiels for many years, since the Commodore days, and was almost like part of the family--and like family members, they'd get into some heated discussions.

The work itself was fun but sometimes the atmosphere could be stressful. Like any job, but with Atari, there was always a little something extra.

I was only an Atari employee for about a year and a half, then I switched to another company. But after I left I kept working for them as a contractor, a side job for me, for another two or three years or so. The documentation manager after I left the company was a great guy. We're still close friends today. I also got some work for another friend who contracted for them and did a lot of the Jaguar documentation.

I understand that you created game manuals for the Atari 7800 and Lynx? Were there any other systems that you worked on? Can you talk us through this please?

I did most of the Lynx games, and some of the last 7800 games, plus there were a couple of 2600 games. The 2600 games were done especially quickly because they weren't a priority at that time.

I did several ST titles, including DeskSet II, an early desktop publishing program that could work as a frontend to Compugraphic typesetting machines. I worked especially hard on that one. It was a pet project of Leonard Tramiel, so we worked closely together on that.

I also did a handful of PC titles, like an update of Silent Butler. I edited the Portfolio manual which was written by the developers in the UK. I also did a guide for its flash memory card, which I thought was one of the coolest things I'd ever seen. All that memory on a little card. Amazing.

Did you work on the manuals for any of the games on the Evercade's Atari collections?

Yes, I did. To the best of my recollection, I wrote the manuals for: Alien Brigade • Ninja Golf • Basketbrawl (I had a lot of fun writing that one) • Planet Smashers • I think I also worked on Motor Psycho (the dates are right) but I don't have strong memories of it.

For the Lynx I wrote: Scrapyard Dog • Basketbrawl • Super Asteroids/ Missile Command (one of the last ones I did) • Awesome Golf • Crystal Mines II • Dracula • Gordo 106 • Ishido • Jimmy Connors Tennis • Power Factor (I'm pretty sure) • Super Skweek • California Games • Checkered Flag • Electrocop • Blue Lightning

And I edited: Chip's Challenge • Todd's Adventures in Slime World • Gates of Zendocon (Maybe I wrote this one) • Zarlor Mercenary

Typically, I would play the game enough to get a good feel for it then I'd try to write a storyline that fit the game's atmosphere. Once I finished the story, the manuals were mainly formulaic: controls, hints, strategy. But where I could, I had some fun with those too. Sometimes I played the games a lot more than I needed to, just because I enjoyed them and had the time and could get away with playing while I called it work. Other times I didn't have the time to play very deep into the game, or didn't enjoy the game as much.

For the Lynx poster manuals my process was similar but with the addition of creating a kind of written storyboard for the artist to follow, with my suggestions for what the artist should draw in each panel. I'm definitely not a visual artist and don't usually think in pictures, so I got to stretch my skills and do something a little different. Those were fun. I don't think anybody's ever done anything like those posters and on those rare occasions when I see one, I'm proud to have been involved in them.

The Lynx poster manuals really were unique and can fetch a hefty price for the poster alone nowadays. How did the idea for those come about?

I don't know who had the idea but it was brilliant. All I know is somebody (probably my manager) came to me and said it was something we wanted to try and asked me to write the text and include instructions for the artist. I think Bill & Ted might have been the first one we did but I don't recall for sure. I missed the longer stories of the full manuals but these were fun to do.

I see that you enjoy writing. How did that process transfer to creating manuals and how did you find it?

I really enjoyed writing the storylines for the games. That was my favourite part of every manual. Most of the rest of the manuals usually followed a formula. But I could be creative with the stories. Sometimes the game itself meant that I had to write within a certain story but most of the time I was able to get creative, use humour, and have fun with the stories. Sometimes, like on the 7800 version of Basketbrawl (the only Atari manual I can remember that I actually sneaked my own name into), I also got to write character biographies.

My training in short stories and, especially poetry, came in handy for things like box copy, where I had a small amount of space and needed to make the best of it. Poetry taught me how to be economical with my words and make every word count. When I got out of school and looked for a writing or editing job, technical writing was not what I had in mind, but Atari turned out to be a great place to start, and I'm grateful that they gave me the space to be creative, even when it was really kind of ridiculous, like the long legend I wrote for the Lynx Shanghai, which is just a basic MahJong game. I took a little more than two pages to invent a myth about why you were playing the game. Totally made up out of the air. It had nothing to do with the game, actually, but I hope I gave players a little atmosphere that made the games more fun.

Were you ever asked or did you ever create a games story board? And if so are there any that stand out for whatever reason?

No. By the time the games came to me they were done and the manuals had to be done pretty quickly so we could print them and get them out the door.

I understand that sometimes games would be created and a story would be 'bolted on' afterwards, were you ever involved in that process?

Yeah, all the time. Often we'd get notes from the developers, but unless the story actually appeared in the intro to the game itself, I didn't always follow them. One example from the Evercade collections is Blue Lightning. The notes for the game had the typical "You're the greatest pilot ever" story. But when I started playing I thought the game was hard and I felt pretty inept. So I wrote up a story about how the mission is hopeless and the player was chosen because you're expendable. I had a lot of fun with that manual. The storyline and the mission descriptions were really funny. I was almost afraid to turn it in but John Skruch, the head of game development, absolutely loved it. He went nuts. My manager thought it was too long and over the top but Skruch told him not to change anything. He did it anyway, and got into some trouble for it. So the final manual only hints at what it could have been. I really wish I still had the original manuscript for that one. One of my biggest regrets from the Atari days was not hanging on to that. But who knew people would still care all these years later?

The good thing that came out of that was I had gained the respect of Skruch and my manager never again edited anything I wrote like that. My status in the department jumped a bit. There was a real change after Blue Lightning, with more humor and longer stories, until financial pressure meant the manuals got much shorter near the end of the Lynx's run.

Another example is the Lynx port of Paperboy. There were a lot of versions of Paperboy and the story was really pretty basic. But I grabbed onto the vandalism aspect of breaking windows of non-subscribers. I mean, it's in the game so I didn't totally make it up, but I've never seen another Paperboy manual that has that revenge aspect.

Sometimes the story of the game was obvious but I still had fun with it, like the Lynx port of Rampage. It follows the game's story but I tried to amp it up a bit and added more humor and atmosphere. And sometimes I just totally made stuff up, like I did with Shanghai.

Were there any manuals that did not see the light of day?

Not that I remember, other than the original Blue Lightning and the manual we were working on for the STacy portable before it was cancelled. There are some games that didn't come out but I don't recognize any that I've seen on the unreleased lists as anything I wrote.

Is there anything you are particularly proud of that you worked on or created during your time there?

I mentioned DeskSet II in an earlier answer. I worked hard on that, and worked directly with Leonard. I could probably call that my first serious software manual and I worked hard on it (Leonard made sure of that!). I used to use that as my writing sample for job interviews early in my career. It turned out pretty nice and included some typesetting experiments I tried, like folding text around an image, things like that. That wasn't as easy to do back then.

There was also a Lynx game called Warbirds. Warbirds was a pretty sophisticated flight sim that did a lot with physics and really showed the capabilities of the Lynx system. The manual was also unusual. It was about 20 pages long, with a bunch of colorful comic-book style pictures, really a forerunner of the poster manuals. I think it's a beautiful manual, unlike anything else we did, or just about any game manual I've seen by anybody. For all Atari's reputation for being overly thrifty in the Tramiel years we really went all out on some of the things we did, like Warbirds and the posters. Compare those manuals to what other consoles were doing and Atari really stands out.

Following on from that last question, were there any projects that did not turn out as you expected or as good as you may have liked for any reason?

Well, Blue Lightning comes to mind, as I mentioned earlier. But the manuals for the games late in the Lynx's run were also disappointing. The need to save money finally kicked in and the manuals got shorter and sometimes even included multiple languages. The storylines, my favorite part of most manuals, were cut down from one or sometimes two pages to a paragraph. I did what I could with that paragraph but it wasn't the same. Those manuals are more like what everybody else was doing. I'd also sometimes have to do several of those smaller manuals in a week so there wasn't much time to play. This was late in my time with Atari, after I'd actually left and was doing their manuals on the side. I could have really had fun with the stories for games like Batman Returns and Toki if I'd been able to because the game worlds invited creativity that I wasn't able to tap into.

Can you tell us what it was like to work at Atari during the Jack and Leonard Tramiel years?

There could sometimes be a lot of pressure, like when I worked directly with Sam, Gary, and Leonard Tramiel on the company's annual reports. Everything had to be perfect and their messages had to be exactly right. Being young then, I was intimidated by company leaders more than I am now, so those kinds of projects made me very nervous, especially when working with people like the Tramiels. I really had positive experiences with them and probably would have been fine working with them if it didn't make me so nervous to be sitting in Sam's office going over the President's message to the world with him. But I was young and inexperienced and I wasn't used to working with the boss of my boss's boss. I didn't have direct interaction with Jack.

Another interesting thing about that time was because of the emphasis on the ST in the music world you never knew who you might run into in the halls. I was a couple of feet away from Mick Fleetwood once and also passed Debbie Gibson in the hall. Mike Pinder of the Moody Blues, one of my favorite bands, spoke to us at a holiday party. That was pretty exciting stuff.

What are your thoughts on the popularity of retro gaming?

I love it. Modern games do some great things with graphics and music but a lot of the most addictive games are the older ones. Back when I worked at Atari I had no idea that people would still be interested in what I was doing so many years later.

What are your thoughts on the Evercade? And Evercade Evolution?

I think the Evercade is great. I've been discovering some old favorites but, more than anything, I'm discovering games I didn't know. In some ways the eighties were a lost decade for me--and even into the early nineties--because I was busy with school, starting a career, and starting a family.

I know most of the games on the Atari collections, including Lynx of course, and then some of the more popular titles, like some of the Namco games that I played on my C64, but so many of the games are brand new for me. As I'm answering these questions I'm also discovering the wonderful worlds of the Dizzy games. I'm not good at them yet but I'm enjoying them.

Evercade Evolution is really well done. I really like how you've carried the brand into your page designs with a feel that's suitably retro while also modern. It has a very professional feel which is impressive for a fan magazine. It also makes great use of the PDF features. It reminds me in some ways of The MagPi, with the colorful attractive pages and content that draws me in. Nice job!

The Evercade has brought back to a certain extent something that has died away from gaming; the manual, albeit in a simpler form. What are your thoughts on these? And would you like to write them? Maybe as a guest author if asked?

I think the manuals are really attractive and do a good job documenting the basic controls in a small space. Some are a bit hard on my old eyes but that's not the fault of the manuals.

It might be fun to do a game again if the right project came up. I mean, I've been doing this for a long time and my life's pretty busy so if I were to do any freelancing again I'd have to consider that. But for the right project I could see myself doing it for the fun of it. I've volunteered for some OpenSource projects I believe in such as an earlier version of OpenOffice (my name is still in their manual credits). In short, I'm not looking for more to do, but I love to write and could be tempted by a fun project.

Do you have any hidden gems or interesting tidbits about your time at Atari that you are willing to share with the readers?

There are a couple things that haven't come up in previous questions that you might find interesting. For one, there was the day when I got into work and Mel Stevens called me into his office and told me he had an important errand to run. He wanted me to drive from Sunnyvale up to Foster City to pick something up at the Epyx headquarters. He made it clear that I was not to stop anywhere and he basically said if I got into an accident it might be better not to survive than to mess up on this errand. I was intrigued. It was obviously important, plus Epyx had made some of my favorite games from my C64 days. So I drove up. The guys at Epyx gave me this odd looking little device with a screen and buttons attached to a box that looked like a modem. When I got back to Atari with it I was mobbed by execs and others. Turns out, it was the prototype for the Handy, which was later renamed the Lynx. So, I'm the guy who brought the Lynx into the Atari building.

Also, the original Lynx carts were these little cards with bumps. People were having trouble removing them from the Lynx. You had to position your hand just right to pull the cart out. So one of the graphic artists was working on a label to affix to the bottom of the Lynx showing how to pull out the game card. He asked me to pose for him while he sketched it. So I was the hand model for the label on the first model of the Lynx. I actually really love that. The hand is not identifiable in any way but, hey, I know it's my hand!

How do you feel when you look back upon your time at Atari?

It was a great place to start my career. It was fun to play games for a living, usually, although a bit tedious if I didn't like the game. Fortunately, I liked most of them. I can't say it was the best place I've ever worked but it was memorable and still fun to talk about. One of my best friends today is somebody I met while I worked for Atari. I wish I'd known people would still be interested today. I'd have held onto some stuff that, at the time, I thought was just work stuff. I wish I had kept some original manuscripts, t-shirts, stuff like that.

Leaving Atari was absolutely the right choice at the time but I was happy to continue as a contractor while I moved my career forward. They gave me a start on a career I'm still in and I'm grateful for that, even though there were some things I wouldn't put up with now that I know better. Overall though, it was positive and I'm proud to have played my little part in a cultural icon.

What are you up to now Scott?

I've been at Adobe for about 13 years. Currently I lead the Adobe Experience Platform product documentation team, and I love it. I'm also doing a lot of my own writing and I'm on the staff of the Writing and Illustrating for Young Readers conference. I'm repeating an earlier answer now. :)

Finally, how can people stay up to date with your current projects?

My personal site is ***www.scottrhoades.com***

I'm also on Facebook, and I'm on Twitter as ***@scorho***

You can also find me on Instagram, although I'm not on very often. I probably still have an old MySpace account somewhere too. :)

We would just like to thank you for giving up your time Scott to talk to us. It has been a pleasure to talk to you and we really appreciate the insights you have given us and wish you well for the future.

FROM FAIRCHILD TO PONG...

VIDEOCART-101

Written by
Vaughan Anscombe

VAUGHAN TAKES A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

File corruption - LOAD "Evercade"

GOTO "How did I get here?"

Memory is a funny old thing, isn't it?
Well, I would agree if only I could remember what it is I just asked.

Boom boom! All jokes aside I thought this time I would indulge myself and take a personal stroll down memory lane. (Not again I hear random people splutter.) Have I done this before? Ah, well. **shrug** Let's carry on.

I often wonder how people can remember all the gaming systems they have owned and the order they had them. To me it's perplexing and frustrating to recall. It should be as easy as going from A to B. It really shouldn't be that hard, should it?

So how did I end up here at **Evercade**? How did my journey begin and what branches did it take? For the purpose of this exercise I'm not going to be including games *(Editor: Good! We just don't have the space!)*. Well, maybe the odd one might sneak in. I'm really just trying to chart the systems that I have owned that shaped my gaming life and led me here to Evercade Towers.

ROM Failure

(I can't remember what I do day to day, so reaching back this far is a little subjective. Please bear with me as the gears and cogs turn.) I know that during the late 70s to early 80s I had various handheld LCD or light up Space Invaders type games. To my recollection they had almost, but not quite, stop motion animation. No, it was more like little shaped lights would 'move' depending on what you pressed. But these memories are really hazy so I'll elaborate no further and just use them as a precursor to what was to come.

I remember playing a friend's **Game & Watch** while on the school bus but as far as I can remember I never owned one.

My dad brought home an **Atari 2600**, I definitely know that. And I'm pretty sure we also had a **Colecovision** or **Intellivision** at one stage but again these thoughts make my brain ache and I have no real evidence other than a vague thought that demands to be heard or at least listened to.

So for now I'll definitely settle with the Atari existed, but I'm not so sure about the other two.

I got to play on, I mean use, the **BBC Model B** at school, which was probably my first introduction to home computers as far as I can remember *(Editor: Isn't that the point of this ramble?)*.

Insert Memory Card

In 1982, aged about 12, I had to have an operation. My stepdad was in the army and so I ended up in an army hospital bed next to a squaddie. I can't remember his name or why he was there but I do remember he had this little computer beside his bed on a pull out dinner table. It was a **ZX81** and it blew my mind. He had Mazogs playing on it and I was totally smitten. I was this squaddies new best friend. I constantly stood by his bed, talking to him and playing that beautiful little game, to the extent that I was told off by the nurses.

Eventually, the squaddie was discharged. The nurse told me to look at his bed. He had left the **ZX81** with me to play it to my heart's content.

I never remembered his name but I have never forgotten that act of kindness.

Retrievable Memory

I guess from here on in things get a little clearer and maybe, just maybe, more accurate but hey there's only me here to verify this so it may all be one big syntax error.

Now, I would have been around 12 or 13 when Santa brought me the machine that would, if not change my life, at least steer it in a different direction; a **ZX Spectrum 48K**. I have waxed lyrical about this little beauty before and rightly so. I guess for me, Evercade brings me the closest to those days even without Spectrum games being on it (yet, fingers crossed).

I then made the move to the **ZX Spectrum 128.** I remember feeling guilty and, yes, even shame for moving on and leaving my 48K friend behind but these were the times I was living in. That guilt and shame would be nothing to what I felt when I eventually jumped ship to the **Amiga 500**.

Why you may ask? *(Editor: Nobody was asking)* Well, that was because of the then intense playground rivalry between Spectrum and Commodore owners ("What about Amstrad?", I hear you say). It almost felt like a spy exchange you see in old black and white war films.

Well, what about it?

Around this time I had taken my **Amiga** with me as I moved into my first flat so I would be about 19-20ish. Again, this is me trying to access random memory neurons but for the sake of moving this along we will go with that.

Somehow I managed to afford an **Amiga 1200** but when exactly I have no idea. Well, I have a vague idea but my brain is actually hurting trying to pin this down.

GOSUB Random Memory

I am several chapters ahead writing this and I've just remembered (yes, that again) that I had a **486 PC** and then a snazzy **Pentium** of some type or another. I remember being able to play the talkie Fate of Atlantis (happy days).

RETURN Main Program

I never owned any of the 8-bit and 16-bit consoles. I guess they just passed me by. I cannot remember ever seeing a NES or… Wait! I do remember playing Alex Kidd. So did I own a **Master System**? I just don't know and so I'll leave that thought where it is. My friends either had a Mega Drive or SNES but I never took the plunge into the 16-bit console era, remaining a steadfast **Amiga** owner.

Data Patch

That is until, with a flash, I purchased an **N64 Goldeneye Bundle** and then promptly wondered why, with the games being so expensive and me living away from home.

Now there is nothing but dark space (easy now Mr Hawking, just think of it as 'dark matter') between this and my next machine which I think was a Dreamcast.

Well, I know, I definitely know, I had a **Dreamcast**. Whether that was next in line is the question but there's only me to argue with myself so that's the order I'll assume it came in.

A quick Google on release dates and now I can say I'm fairly certain old Dreamy was next in line.

She was followed by an **Xbox**. Now things are getting more complicated in my mind's eye. You would think that the nearer to the present day the more accessible memory would become but let me tell you, it's not.

Holistic Memory

My brother and friends went and bought PlayStations. I never did but I eventually got a **PS2**.

What I can't remember was if this was before or after the **Xbox 360**? I have a feeling, and this time it seems pretty certain after a lucid memory moment, that the **PS2** was first. My soon-to-be brother-in-law was showing me FIFA (whatever) and I remember being blown away by the sounds and real teams, where I was used to playing Pro Evo. So yes, sad as that thought was, I'll settle for that order.

Then I moved onto the **PS4** which I'm certain of as I used some of my inheritance to get the machine, and having never played the Uncharted games I swapped systems this time around so I could.

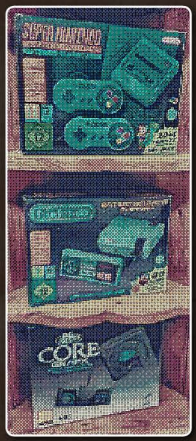
Memory Cache

It was about this time that I started feeling that games on current-gen machines were not really scratching that gaming itch for me anymore.

I needed something else and that was a return to my gaming roots. So, I started looking for ways to play retro games.

Now this would be just around pre-lockdown and I'm struggling with this order, that's how bad my short-term memory has become.

I think "this is the way", as somebody somewhere said a long time ago.



The Atari and Sega consoles by AtGames I thought looked good but they held no real nostalgia for me so I discounted them and moved on.

I then got a **Mega Drive Mini** via FB marketplace, quickly followed by the **SNES Mini**. Both of these held no nostalgia for me *(Editor: I'm getting déjà vu here)*.

Then I got the **PC Engine Mini** for my 50th on a whim that was rapidly turning into an addiction, and wow, I really liked it.

My gaming hallway was starting to run out of room and I was going to have to strategically relocate my wife's Disney stuff somewhere else, but that's a whole different story.

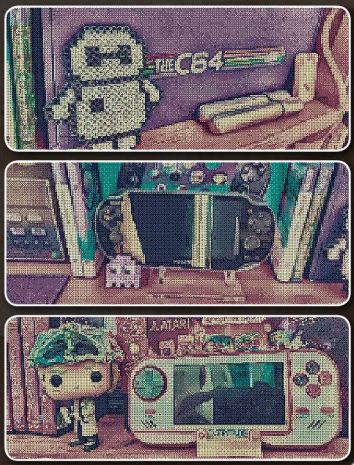
Memory Patch

It now occurs to me through a memory patch, or more accurately waking up in a cold sweat, that my first mini retro console was in fact the **ZX Spectrum Vega** and not the AtGames consoles.

I could rewrite this into chronological order but it amuses me to leave it here and illustrate the point I am trying to make about my memory. :)

End of Update

I seemed to have caught the retro mini console bug and up next, after the **Core Grafx**, was the **Neo Geo Mini**. The screen proved too small for these old eyes, so I wired it through the TV.



I had a real yearning for what I perceived as the golden days. I wanted to play the old arcade games I grew up with. I know, I could run emulators, yadda yadda yadda, but keep in mind I only have an old out-of-date **Mac**. I don't really understand how that scene works and to be honest I can't be bothered with all the hassle - Plug and Play is my motto. MAME and any other emulators were just words to me and nothing else.

After doing some research (mainly messaging **Crazy Burger**) I plumped for a Chinese **Super Console X Pro** which came with a mind-blowing 50,000 games on it. It does the job for me and certainly scratches that itch.

The **C64 Mini** quickly followed. Why? Because it was there and I wanted it. Somewhere in this holistic collection of thoughts I also picked up a **PS Vita** mainly because I wanted to play Uncharted.

Low Memory

"What's all this got to do with an **Evercade**?" I hear you thinking.

Well, once again I seem to have skipped a year or so as the **Evercade (handheld)** was also a gift for my 50th birthday and it should have appeared earlier in this thought pattern. *(Editor: There's a pattern?)*

I have left it to almost the last because out of all these machines it's the one that has given me the greatest joy and the most use. That is until my second to last purchase; the **Evercade VS**. *(Editor: Or you just plain forgot, didn't you?)*

As stated in a previous issue, the **VS** was a machine I didn't know I needed but now I use it all the time. A machine that for me houses the essence of what gaming used to be somewhere under its shiny, black casing.

Since that time the **A500 Mini** has arrived (I told my wife that I wouldn't get any more consoles) but I just couldn't resist (so don't tell her). I think I have sneaked it in successfully.

There are also some honourable mentions. A **Game Boy Advance SP** that I got from a car boot sometime in the past, and similarly a **Sega Game Gear**, but they were to me just a passing fad. I guess I was just not ready for the retro rabbit hole in those days.

So that's my story of how I ended up with **Evercade**! Is it accurate? Well as far as I can remember it is! I wouldn't exactly call it total recall, more a muddied remembrance. Now I'm in need of a good defragging and some paracetamol.

I have tried to chart my gaming history before and I just give up. The synaptic nerves are just not up to it.

So, this is my story and this is how I ended up at the **Evercade**. It's a cool place and has a great community. I think I'll be staying awhile.

(Oh blast, I've just remembered the **Switch**!)

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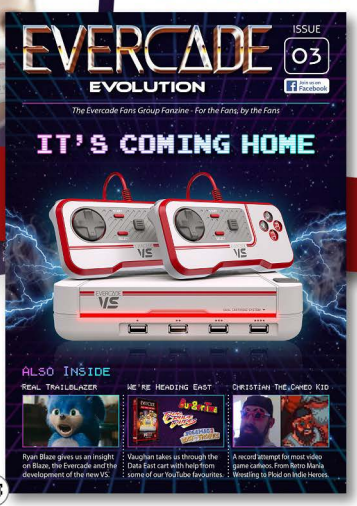
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